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THE PLENITUDE OF HISTORICISM

by

PAUL LANGHAM

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Plentitude of Historicism submitted by Paul Langham in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an elaboration and defence of historicism, the doctrine that man is an historical being and can only be understood as such. Traditionally, historicism has been criticized for endorsing one or more of three positions: predictionism, the view that it is possible to ascertain general features of the historical process and, thereby, foretell what will happen in the future; holism, the doctrine that social wholes are more than the sum of the human individuals who make them up; and irrationalism, the doctrine that there are no trans-historical truths of science or morality. Each of these positions is defended and they are drawn together to provide a comprehensive theory in terms of which both individual historical events and the historical process as a whole can be understood.

It is argued that predictionism is a necessary condition of all history and of all historiography. Several "disproofs" of predictionism suggested by Collingwood and Popper are examined and are rejected as mistaken or inconclusive. These include the Micawber Thesis, which turns on the impossibility of achieving completeness and closure with respect to social systems, and Popper's final argument against predictionism, which rests on the importance of the growth of human knowledge in history. It is maintained, moreover, that the epistemology of Collingwood and Popper itself implies predictionism, that history cannot be dissociated from speculative philosophy of history.

The traditional antithesis between individualism and holism is seen to rest on two illegitimate abstractions. An analysis is suggested in terms of concrete universals which preserves the truths of both individualism and holism while eliminating the paradoxes of each. In light of this synthesis of individualism and holism, it becomes no longer anomalous that individualism appears valid from the ontological perspective but not from the methodological or that social wholes consist only of human individuals but transcend mere particular people. It is also demonstrated that the supposed incompatibility between holism and the freedom of the individual is illusory, that it too results from illegitimate abstractions.

The irrationalism of which historicism stands accused is no mere unreasonableness but the result of more consistent treatment of the interpretational epistemology of Collingwood and Popper. An analysis of belief shows that there are two fundamental aspects of belief: hypotheticality and efficaciousness. The basic beliefs of a socio-historical environment are those which reflect (or structure) that environment's entire world-view. Such beliefs are not empirically verifiable within the system which they structure. The traditional view of ameliorative progression in history is shown to be defective and is replaced with a theory of the historical process based on the analysis of belief given. Finally, a sketch is given of how the predictionist, holist and irrationalist elements of historicism are to be employed to underwrite rational explanation in history.

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CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICISM AND ANTI-HISTORICISM

1.1 Historicism and Its Enemies: Mircea Eliade has observed that "the modern world is, at the present moment, not entirely converted to historicism".[1] This is certainly an understatement. The project to be undertaken in the following pages is a demonstration of the plenitude of historicism. At first sight, it might appear that an essential prerequisite not merely for the successful completion of such a project but for its very initiation would be some clear and concise formulation of the doctrine in question: perhaps, a brief statement of a few lines indicating what historicism is. For how could it be proven that a doctrine were, say, plenitudinous, true, heuristically productive, or what have you, unless it first be stated what the doctrine be? Unfortunately, in the case of historicism, it is the very articulation of the doctrine that presents one of the most difficult tasks of all. For example, Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck have suggested five possible interpretations of the term;[2] and another

author, Calvin G. Rand, besides isolating what he considers the proper meanings of 'historicism', of which there are two, suggests four other interpretations which, to his mind, are definitely not correct.[3]

The reason for the existence of such a multiplicity of interpretations is not difficult to discern. Historicism and its companion doctrine of the historicity of man have of late come to occupy such a pre-eminent position in discussions of history, philosophy and society. Man, it has been said, has discovered his historicity, has discovered that he is an historical being. The genesis or the inspiration or the evidence which gave rise to this discovery, if such it may properly be termed, has been attributed to various traumatic experiences of recent history: to the collapse of the Junker class in Germany; to the rush of events which followed the assassination at Sarajevo and culminated in the defeatism and emptiness of post-1918 Germany; to the defeat and occupation of France by the Germans; and to the holocaust of Auschwitz and Belsen. Attributing such discoveries to concrete historical experiences is by no means novel: Lord Acton had, indeed, attributed an earlier discovery of the historical nature of man by German historians to the French Revolution and its aftermath.[4] (And more recently Kenneth Clarke has stated that Romanticism is the direct result of the Lisbon earthquake.) Actually, it would be quite mistaken, and even improper, to speak of any of these experiences, either separately or jointly, as being the genesis or the inspiration or the evidence of historicism. In the first place, the history of mankind even before the French Revolution (or the Lisbon earthquake) is replete with equally traumatic experiences, yet none of these sparked such a revelation. The Thirty Years War, for instance, spread confusion,

destruction, famine, religious and political scepticism throughout Europe; nonetheless, it did not result in a discovery or a crisis of historicism. As Raymond Aron notes:

> Ni la découverte des primitifs, ni celle des cultures autres ne suscitait le scepticisme ou l'anarchisme aussi longtemps que l'on maintenait la signification normative, normale pour ainsi dire, de la société présente. Plus redoutable que l'investigation empirique est la crise qui ebranle notre civilization.[5]

In the second place, the intellectual origins of historicism can easily be seen to antedate even the earliest of the experiences mentioned. Indeed, the doctrine has itself been dubbed the cause of most of them. The historicist doctrine is more appropriately considered, from one point of view, as the culmination of certain ideas and ideals which have their roots in the Romantic reaction against Rationalism and the Enlightenment. (Hence, were we to accept Clarke's naive assessment, it would be an effect of the Lisbon earthquake!) Although it may be as equally improper to speak of the events mentioned as being the causes of the discovery of historicism as of that discovery being the cause of those events, the events in question have dramatically underlined the idea and have driven it home with great force. If the earlier German discovery is the academic realization of historicity, then the twentieth century is witnessing its universal realization.

In what does this traumatic or traumatizing discovery consist? One proposition which seems essential to any historicist approach is that man is thrown into the world, into surroundings neither of his own making nor of his own choosing: that for man the world, both natural and social, is simply there, given:

> Life [maintains Ortega] is fired at us point-blank . . . where and when we are born, or happen to find ourselves after we are born, there and then, like it or not, we must sink or swim.[6]

Once this elementary proposition has been enunciated, however, there is little more that can be added without leaning toward one partisan opinion or another, since there is little agreement as to what is involved in or implied by this proposition. It is to a large degree this partisanship which is responsible for the existence of so much confusion surrounding the idea of historicism. But this partisanship is itself understood once one considers some of the possible interpretations of the historicist proposition stated.

One view of the consequences of the discovery that the social world is as arbitrarily given as the natural world is that, as the latter is subject to unchanging and unchangeable natural laws, so the former is conditioned by gross historical forces, and that man can do as little about the one as about the other. "Men have," claims Rudolf Bultmann, "become conscious not only of their dependence but also of their helplessness. They have come to feel that they are not only interwoven with the course of history but are at its mercy."[7] Even when an individual attempts to assert himself, to act voluntarily, to impose his will on the world, he may come to feel that in the final analysis he is at most merely expressing an historically conditioned desire that may anyway be frustrated or perverted by historical forces beyond his control. Man is caught in the relentless tide of history from which there is no escape. Such a view of man's historicity -- though by no means the only or necessary view -- instills in man a

terror of history, a dread and despair, and a pessimism regarding his own possibilities of effective and authentic action. Given the widespread implications of such a discovery and its importance, if true, for all human endeavours, it is not surprising that sometimes violent controversies have ensued concerning the truth, the falsity and the exact implications of the doctrine of historicism for history, philosophy and society, especially between historicists and the champions of liberal ideologies. It is this very topicality and the importance of the doctrine which makes definition so difficult.

The existence of ideological, nationalistic and moralistic connotations that the various formulations or implications or implementations of the doctrine do, or are thought to, carry with them has frequently precipitated the out-of-hand rejection of any theory that claims to possess an historicist perspective and the subsequent use of the term 'historicism' as a term of abuse.[8] What is more, two of the prime-movers in turning the doctrine of historicism from a doctrine with serious philosophical pretensions into something, as it were, beneath contempt have undoubtedly been Sir Karl Popper and Friedrich Hayek, both of whom adopt an interpretation of historicism similar to that of Bultmann. This is doubly unfortunate, since the characterization of historicism given by Popper and Hayek, as "an approach to the social sciences which assumes that <u>historical prediction</u> is their principle aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the 'rhythms' or the 'patterns', the 'laws' or the 'trends' that underlie the evolution of history",[9] has been by far the most influential characterization given in recent literature. Popper and Hayek, in effect, equate historicism with traditional

speculative philosophy of history which attempts to discern in the historical process some hidden dialectic or "logos" or "reason" which will explain or account for all historical occurrences. This view that it is possible to discover historical laws or trends and to employ these to predict what will happen in the future, the view which according to Popper and Hayek is the cornerstone of historicism, we shall term 'predictionism'.

If historicism does consist centrally in attempting to divine the course of history as a whole, then it may be tempting to reject it as a dead-letter, since speculative philosophy of history is no longer in vogue among historians and philosophers of history. It has been dismissed by most as "a process of excogitation and guess-work . . . a consequence of mental impotence",[10] as the mere plaything of German and Italian metaphysicians.[11] It is often thought of as no more than a game to entertain those of little intellect: "Naturalistic or cosmological romances," writes Croce, "will always be composed by those who feel inspired to write them, and they will always find eager and appreciative readers, especially among the lazy, who are pleased to possess the 'secrets of the world' in a few pages."[12] But as a serious intellectual endeavour, the construction of grand universal histories like those of Vico, Hegel and Marx is regarded as passé.

Besides a belief in predictionism, Popper contends that most historicists are also committed to a belief in holism, i.e., to the belief that the essential objects of historical and sociological study, social groups, are more than the mere sum of the persons making up those groups and more than the mere sum of relationships between the persons making up those groups.[13] Anti-naturalistic historicists

supposedly use this view of society as an argument against the employment of the methods of natural science in history. They stress the fact that social groups and facts about social groups cannot be broken into atomic parts as, perhaps, can the data of the natural sciences, that rather social groups are to be treated as organic wholes.[14] Historically, such a belief in the organic nature of social groups has been exemplified in the writings of authors like Vico, Herder, Rousseau and Hegel; and traditionally this view has been associated with the possibility of ascertaining universal laws of development of societies.[15]

Popper and Hayek maintain that historicism's faith in predictionism and its stress on the methodological and ontological importance of holism are responsible for both the unsatisfactory state of the social sciences and the existence of those most dangerous political movements, fascism and communism, with their belief in utopian social planning. The discovery of the historicity of man is seen as the discovery that there are large-scale historical organisms which obey their own laws of development, or dialectic, besides which the human individual is seen as a mere helpless adjunct, "as a pawn, as a somewhat insignificant instrument in the general development of mankind".[16] Such a view is, of course, totally counter to liberal ideology. In the first place, when the course of history is envisaged as the working out of some necessary dialectic or "logos" or "reason", there appears to be a denial of the possibility of individual freedom. In the second place, not only would such grandiose visions lead to the systematic implementation of social and political reforms intended to achieve the perfect state, to large-scale upheavals in traditional

ways, but the belief that this or that system of society and politics is perfect and should, therefore, never be changed, easily leads to totalitarian measures for maintaining that system. Plato's Republic easily transforms into the Thousand Year Reich or into Stalinist "democracy". Indeed, the more that one believes that one's system is perfect and is for the common and greatest good of all mankind, the more one is willing to ensure that it is not overturned by so-called "revisionists" and "foreign aggressors".

A certain incongruence slips in here concerning precisely what the historicist is supposed to believe. On the one hand, he is accused of holding that the individual is helpless in the face of gross historical forces, that he cannot make any difference to history; yet, on the other hand, the historicist is seen as a believer in utopian planning. According to the second view, the historicist holds that we must first draw up "a blue-print of the society at which we aim, only then can we begin to consider the best ways and means for its realization, and to draw up a plan for practical action".[17] But if the first view is correct, such a project is totally absurd. Sometimes Popper does write as though there are two separate versions of historicism, one holding the first view and the other the second; yet there are occasions on which one and the same person is supposed to hold both. Does Marx hold both? Is his programme analogous to inciting people to revolutionary action in order to ensure that the sun will rise tomorrow? Marx does maintain that:

> When a society has discovered the natural law that determines its own development, even then it can

> neither overleap the natural phase of its evolution, nor shuffle them out of the world by a stroke of the pen. But this much it can do: it can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs.[18]

This does appear to suggest a peculiar amalgam of the two views. Whichever of these historicist views is adopted, however, the result is a nihilistic vision of the capabilities of the human individual. On the first view, the human individual has absolutely no freedom of action; on the second, his freedom of action must be made subservient to the greater good of society. And the Marxian view does seem to endorse "a peculiar variety of fatalism", a fatalism in which "activism can be justified only so long as it acquiesces in impending changes and helps them along".[19] Any of these views would be abhorrent to the liberal mind.

Even the dedication of The Poverty of Historicism, to the "memory of the countless men and women of all creeds or nations or races who fell victims to the fascist and communist belief in Inexorable Laws of Historical Development", has played a part in poisoning the wells against historicism. The effect of this excessively emotional and polemical dedication and, in general, of the crusading spirit of the writings of Popper and Hayek has been the reduction of historicism to a species of philosophical pariah: To be an historicist is, eo ipso, to endorse all of the atrocities that have been committed against manking in the name of totalitarianism. Popper himself was perfectly aware of the emotional and polemical tone of his attacks.[20] Indeed, he does go some way to excuse his attack on historicism by explaining that he deliberately chose "the somewhat unfamiliar label 'historicism' [in the hope of avoiding] mere verbal quibbles: for," he says, "nobody,

I hope, will be tempted to question whether any of the arguments here discussed really or properly or essentially belong to historicism, or what the word 'historicism' really or properly or essentially means".[21] It cannot be doubted, however, that both Popper and Hayek did believe that the doctrine that they had isolated as historicism was a genuine philosophical thesis held by quite definite groups of philosophers, historians, sociologists, economists and political theorists. They may not have wished to claim that all those who might be termed historicists were necessarily predictionists and holists, but they did at least consider that many, if not most, historicists were . . . and those by no means the least important ones.

Nor did Popper's awareness of his own bias prevent him from engaging in one of the most sustained and vicious ad hominem arguments in recent philosophy, viz., that against Hegel in The Open Society and Its Enemies. "Hegel's philosophy," he assures us, "was inspired by ulterior motives . . . it cannot therefore be taken seriously".[22] A classic example of an appeal to faulty motives! Again: "It seems improbable that Hegel would ever have become the most influential figure in German philosophy without the authority of the Prussian state behind him."[23] Not only a classic case of an appeal to bad connections, but also a suggestion that Hegel's theories were only accepted in the first place because they were supported by an appeal to authority, or even fear: as if the reasons why a theory is accepted have anything to do with the truth of that theory, or with its falsity. And on the content of Hegel's work: "He is supreme only in his lack of originality. There is nothing in Hegel's writing that had not been said better before him."[24] As if originality were a

criterion of truth! But among those from whom Hegel "plagiarized" were Heracleitus, Plato and Aristotle: when they said the things that Hegel cribbed, it was great philosophy! Such is Popper's assessment of one of the most influential philosophers of recent times: an assessment coloured by the belief that Hegel counsels totalitarianism.

The Popper-Hayek view that historicism is the cause of fascism and communism is widely accepted; and the moral and emotional repugnance that is felt for totalitarianism is often played upon to discredit historicist doctrines. Seligman, for example, claims that the mythology of Sombart's Deutscher Sozialismus, with its fundamental postulate of the German Volksgeist, "married to the destructive power of the Third Reich, bore fruit in the crematoria of Treblinka and Maidenek".[25] A statement scarcely likely to inspire confidence in historicism . . . and this comment he includes in an argument against a methodological position in economics!

Very few authors have fallen into the temptation of questioning the characterization given by Popper and Hayek, but the effect has been the rejection not merely of that doctrine which they construct under the "somewhat unfamiliar label 'historicism'" but of any and all historicist doctrines.[26] That this has indeed been the effect is amply demonstrated by the fact that Hayden V. White, in his paper "On History and Historicisms" which serves as the introduction to the English translation of Antoni's Storicismo e antistoricismo, remarks that he thought it wise, in view of the widespread acceptance of Popper's characterization, to eliminate the word 'historicism' from the title of the English version, rechristening it From History to Sociology: The Transition in German Historical Thinking.[27] As if

thereby to dissociate the movement discussed by Antoni from the works and positions of authors discussed by Popper and Hayek.

Popper and Hayek have not, of course, been the only authors to have poured scorn on historicism, nor is the belief in historical prediction and the propagation of totalitarianism the only blasphemy of which historicists have been accused. Leo Strauss has attacked historicism not for preaching that there are certain inexorable laws of historical development which would render human activism impotent and senseless, but for the very different reason that historicists deny the possibility and the validity of natural laws and natural rights and, hence, allow that whatever men might do will be "morally" permissible. "To reject natural rights," according to Strauss, "is tantamount to saying that all right is determined exclusively by legislators and the courts of the various countries."[28] Since the legislators and the courts might make any laws that they please, this would mean that anything could become "morally" correct or acceptable or proper. Strauss maintains, however, that "it is obviously meaningful, and sometimes even necessary, to speak of 'unjust' laws or 'unjust' decisions", and since "the rejection of natural rights is bound to lead to disastrous consequences", such as nihilism and/or anarchism, historicism must be false or invalid.[29]

The denial of the existence of any moral imperatives of universal scope, of the validity of all transhistorical values, has alienated many from historicism. Barraclough, for example, although admitting that "the result [of historicism] has been to enrich our experience, to increase beyond measure our perceptions of reality, if not, indeed, our very capacity for perception", nonetheless, rejects the

doctrine as "the progenitor of relativism".

> Who has the right [he asks] to blame [the common man] if, finding as a result of an overdose of history that he has no standards left, except to judge of everything in the light of circumstances, he either uses history as a comfortable pretext for cynicism, or (more likely) rejects it in disgust.[30]

Moral values and the so-called "crisis of historicism" have been central problems for many historicists; but no arguments such as those of Strauss and Barraclough can be taken as refuting historicism, since they so patently beg such a multitude of questions. Is it, for example, so "obviously meaningful . . . to speak of 'unjust' laws and 'unjust' decisions"? It cannot be too obvious, since much of contemporary analysis would appear to suggest that, even if such talk is meaningful at all, at the very least a radical reinterpretation of the concepts of 'justice' and 'morality' are in order. All that Strauss can offer against those tainted with "German relativism" is to say that:

> If there is no standard higher than the ideal of our society, we are utterly unable to take a critical distance from that ideal. But the mere fact that we can raise the question of the worth of the ideal of our society shows that there is something in man that is not altogether in slavery to his society, and therefore that we are able, and hence obliged, to look for a standard with reference to which we can judge of the ideals of our own as well as of any other society.[31]

The fact, however, of questioning either entire value-systems or elements of value-systems proves nothing about the existence of

transhistorical values. A person may question some element of his given socio-historical value-system either because he has been influenced by some other system of values or because it is in apparent conflict with some other, perhaps more general, value of his own society. If the latter is the case, no other system at all is involved and, ipso facto, no transhistorical system; if the former, then even if this other system should replace the previous system in toto, there would be nothing to suggest that it was more transhistorical than the other. Moreover, even if the doctrine of historicism does teach that there are no transhistorical moral standards, this does not mean that "nothing except dull and stale habit could prevent us from placidly accepting a change in the direction of [e.g.] cannibalism".[32] Strauss offers us a false dilemma in asking us to decide between natural law and dull and stale habit.

Interestingly, one of the most consistent critics of this false dilemma has been Popper. "Nearly all misunderstandings [about moral norms]," he writes, "can be traced back to one fundamental misapprehension, namely, to the belief that 'convention' implies 'arbitrariness'; that if we are free to choose any system of norms we like, then one system is just as good as another."[33] This fundamental misapprehension originates with the rejection of <u>naive naturalism</u>, a view which fails to differentiate between natural laws or regularities and moral norms or imperatives, i.e., a view which confuses fact and value. When men realize that moral norms are man-made and can be broken, perhaps without unpleasant repercussions, naive naturalism becomes untenable. Unfortunately, it is replaced with <u>naive conventionalism</u>, i.e., the view that, as mere conventions,

men's moral norms are totally arbitrary. The equation of conventionalism and arbitrariness Popper totally rejects.

> Norms are man-made [he contends] in the sense that we must blame nobody but ourselves for them; neither nature nor God. It is our business to improve them as much as we can, if we find that they are objectionable . . . By saying that some systems of laws can be improved, that some laws are better than others, I . . . imply that we can compare the existing normative laws (or social institutions) with some standard norms which we have decided are worthy of being realized. But even these standards are of our own making in the sense that our decision in favour of them is our own decision, and that we alone carry the responsibility for adopting them.[34]

(Perhaps, we do have a blue-print.) Popper does not explain how we arrive at a different set of norms other than those of existing social code, nor what criteria are or should be used in deciding between competing value-systems; but, on an intuitive level at least, he does show that there is some middle ground between natural law and mere arbitrary convention.

The question also arises with respect to the Strauss-Barraclough position of whether or not the rejection of natural law does lead necessarily to disastrous consequences. On this point, Popper again disagrees. Whilst allowing that "the theory of natural right has, in the course of history, often been proffered in support of equalitarian and humanitarian ideas [and] the positivist school was usually in the opposite camp", he maintains that "this is not much more than an accident".[35] (An example of the opposite trend can be seen in the

legal positivism of Savigny which was opposed to the French theories of natural rights.[36]) In the first place, however, doubt has already been cast on the view that legal positivism is the only alternative to natural law theory; and, in the second place, even if it were and even if legal positivism were always associated with non-equalitarian and non-humanitarian ideas, it would still not have been proven that the rejection of natural law leads to disastrous consequences. And even if that were proven, Strauss' case would be in no better a position. That a theory leads to disastrous consequences does not constitute appropriate grounds for its rejection. One can imagine a claim similar to that of Strauss being made by a scientist with respect to the discoveries of modern physics and their implications for our lives: Modern physics enables man to produce thermo-nuclear weapons and these could lead to disastrous consequences; therefore, we must conclude, the theories of modern physics are false. Possible or actual effects cannot be a criterion of truth, but only of the advisability of propagating it. In order for Strauss' arguments to hold water, one must adopt the doctrine that freedom, morality and true religion come only from, or with, truth; but there is no real guarantee that truth leads to any of these desirable consequences.

Barraclough's final judgment on historicism is even more bizarre. "[Historicism]," he maintains, "expresses the appropriate outlook of [a period of defeat and collapse], and of that period alone, and is no longer appropriate to a changing world."[37] (Should that not have been 'a changed world'?) This way of looking at the historical world is the way taught by historicism (or historical relativism); it is rather self-contradictory of Barraclough, therefore, to deny the

validity of historicism on the basis of an attitude which itself is claimed to be historicist.

Despite Popper's denial of the false dilemma offered by the natural law theorists, he does show great concern over what he calls 'historism', a doctrine which suggests "the possibility of analyzing and explaining the differences between [e.g.] the various sociological doctrines and schools, by referring either to their connection with the predilections and interests prevailing in a particular historical period", and over the sociology of knowledge, which suggests that such analysis and explanation can be achieved by reference to "political or economic or class interests".[38] Both historism and the sociology of knowledge are tantamount to historical relativism, the doctrine that there are no transhistorical truths of science or morality. It is because there are presumed to be no transhistorical standards of truth that the proponents of historism and the sociology of knowledge believe that it is appropriate to analyze and explain doctrines and beliefs rather than to justify or verify or falsify them. Although Popper repeatedly says that historism should not be confused with what he calls 'historicism',[39] it is clear that he does believe: (a) that most, if not all, historicists are also historists, and (b) that there is some deeper connection between historicism and historism. Indeed, Popper often subsumes historism under historicism: "[Marx's] theory of morality," he says, for example, "may be characterized as historicist because it holds that all moral categories are dependent on the historical situation; it is usually described as historical relativism in the field of ethics."[40] And a strong connection between the two is suggested in "Marx's historicist

moral theory is, of course [!], only the result of his view concerning the method of social science, of his sociological determinism . . ."[41] (Note: Even if this connection does exist between what Popper calls 'historicism' and what he calls 'historism', it would imply only that all historicists should also be historists, not that all historists, historical relativists, should be historicists, proponents of predictionism.) The doctrine of historism Popper takes to be "opposed to rationalism (and especially to the doctrine of the rational unity of mankind) . . ."[42] For this reason, he dubs the doctrine 'irrationalism'.

Popper, however, like Barraclough, sometimes succumbs to using expressions reminiscent of the doctrine that he is attacking. For example: "It can hardly be doubted that Hegel's and Marx's historicist philosophies are characteristic products of their time -- a time of social change."[43]

It is interesting to note that historicists stand convicted of causing all of the ills of modern society: not only totalitarianism, but also anarchism; not only are they responsible for the suppression of the individual, they are also responsible for his complete and radical freedom from all external moral restraint. These apparently polar interpretations need not be quite as contrary as they appear. As Croce points out, "although the intention of [Hegel's work] has been to raise [the concept and sentiment of liberty and the moral life] to the rank of the supreme principle, [systems such as that of Hegel have] an implicit logical tendency [to subvert any such project despite any good intentions of the author]".[44] If this is true, it is a comment on any attempt to "raise the concept and sentiment of

liberty and the moral life to the rank of the supreme principle", not just a comment on Hegel's historicism . . . and the aim of Popper and Hayek, of Strauss and Barraclough, presumably, is to do just this.

1.2 Historicism and Neo-Historicism: It has been attacks like those of Popper and Hayek, Strauss and Barraclough that have precipitated the widespread, but ill-informed, rejection of historicism. "Il termine storicismo," Gentile has observed, "è divenuto una specie di panno rosso che fa impennare tutti i generosi campioni dei valori dello spirito; e li rende furiosi e intrattabili."[1] Who would endorse a philosophical doctrine with so many crimes to its credit, or to its discredit?

In view of the number of adherents to historicism, however, one may, perhaps, be forgiven for suspecting that there is more to that doctrine than either a belief in inexorable laws of historical development, or an assertion of the organicity of social groups, or a denial of any transhistorical truths of science and morality. It is significant that The Poverty of Historicism and The Open Society and Its Enemies contain few direct references to the works of most accredited contemporary historicists. Likewise, Hayek's The Counter-Revolution of Science, although on the whole providing a more accurate and balanced account of historicism, tends to concentrate far too much on just one aspect or interpretation of it. Dilthey, Croce, Collingwood and Ortega, all of whom figure in, e.g., Meyerhoff's section "The Heritage of Historicism"[2], manage only one mention

between them in the three books cited. Nor are Troeltsch and Meinecke, both of whom are included with Dilthey in Rand's paper, afforded much more attention: they manage three mentions between them, and those only in passing, despite the fact that Troeltsch's Der Historismus und seine Probleme and Meinecke's Die Entstehung des Historismus are considered the most authoritative works on the origins and problems of historicism. Also almost completely ignored by Popper and Hayek -- or, if not ignored, at least separated off -- are the earlier historicists: the members of the German Historical School, e.g., the historians Ranke, Loebell and Droysen;[3] the legalist von Savigny; the economists Roscher, Hildebrand and Knies; and the brothers Grimm. In the works of Popper and Hayek, attention is naturally focused on those writers who believe in historical predictionism and almost exclusively on those portions of their works in which this belief is expressed. So dominant is this theme that Popper and Hayek brand anyone who seems to believe in predictionism an historicist, irrespective of his reasons or epistemology. Historicists may, therefore, be positivists or idealists, realists or rationalists: little or no distinction is made. Popper speaks, e.g., of "Spengler, the most famous historicist" and of "Marxism, so far the purest, the most developed and the most dangerous form of historicism".[4] Few of the writers mentioned by Popper and Hayek are discussed at all by any neo-historicists; and, if they are, it is usually for some other reason than that they believe in historical predictionism or in order to criticize them precisely because they do stress its possibility. Manlio Ciardo, for example, in his Quattro epoche dello storicismo, considers Vico, Kant, Hegel and Croce as the four major contributors

to historicism.[5] Of those listed, Popper and Hayek treat only of Hegel; and that only on the mistaken belief that he is a champion of totalitarianism and historical predictionism. Pietro Rossi devotes a chapter of his Lo storicismo tedesco contemporaneo to that most misunderstood philosopher Oswald Spengler, but there is scarcely a mention of predictionism.[6] Indeed, there is little in the Popper-Hayek characterization of historicism that would suggest that it would cover Spengler at all.

One recent author, Abbagnano in his chapter "Lo storicismo", has gone so far as to deny that historicism has anything whatsoever to do with predictionism and/or grandiose interpretations of the historical process. "One can indicate by the word 'historicism'," he writes, "any philosophy that recognizes as its exclusive or fundamental task the determination of the nature and validity of the instruments of historical understanding."[7] Moreover, he goes on to state that: "Historicism is not and does not seek to be . . . a metaphysics or teleology of history, a vision or a global interpretation of history . . ."[8] This would mean that the Popper-Hayek characterization which represents historicism as speculative philosophy of history, as concerned solely with history as res gestae -- with history in its material or concrete mode[9] -- is totally inappropriate. It would suggest that 'historicism' is a blanket term that covers all critical philosophy of history, all investigations into the logic of historical enquiry -- that it is concerned with history in its formal mode.[10] Such a characterization is, however, as misleading as the one given by Popper and Hayek, where all speculative philosophy of history is subsumed under the rubric

'historicism' -- and almost as misleading as that suggested by W. B. White, where that word covers both speculative and critical philosophy of history.[11] Abbagnano may, perhaps, be forgiven for his overly inclusive definition, since he had in mind "one specific current of contemporary philosophy", viz., that of the neo-Kantian school associated with Dilthey, which at the time was the most prominent, if not the only, school solely concerned with problems of historical knowledge and understanding. In actual fact, however, historicism should be regarded as one particular way of answering the questions of that general problem constellation, a way which concentrates on history as a study sui generis, that considers that the subject matter of history makes it necessary to employ methods not applicable to the natural sciences.[12] In this, Popper's treatment of historicism as anti-naturalistic is correct. Moreover, since the historicists claim that it is because of the nature of the subject matter that the methods of history must differ from those of the natural sciences, they still remain committed to commenting on the nature of the historical process itself, which means that they might not be totally unaffected by Popper's criticisms of speculative philosophy of history after all.

The authors ignored or separated off by Popper and Hayek represent what might be called the liberal wing of historicism -- although, in reality, Hegel, Marx and Spengler were no less liberal. The German Historical School was primarily concerned with opposing French rationalism and imperialism. The works of Savigny, e.g., his "Of the Vocation of Our Age for Legislation and Jurisprudence", questioned the universal applicability of the Napoleonic Code and

suggested that for each people there was a legal code that was peculiarly appropriate. Roscher, Hildebrand and Knies refused to accept that the a priori classical theory of economics was applicable to the German situation: it was, they maintained, designed for industrial economies like those of England and France. Instead, they suggested an historical approach to economics in which a priori theories took second place to detailed accounts of the actual economies of different countries. Likewise, the brothers Grimm, rather than accept that the French form of literature was appropriate to all peoples, resurrected the folk-tales of their native Germany. Each of these, in a way, was attacking totalitarianism. Croce and Collingwood, too, were concerned with supporting individualism against totalitarianism and barbarism. Indeed, Croce, who notes that "people commonly turn to blaming historical thought or historicism for the generating of these diseases, by promoting fatalism, by dissolving absolute values [etc.]", not only asserts that historicism has nothing to do with these diseases, but also asserts, for example, that "the overcoming of the concept of the fixity of truth" which is associated with historicism is the fundamental discovery of <u>liberalism</u> -- that which distinguishes liberalism from "the illuminism and progressivism and rationalism of the seventeenth century" -- and that "historicism is the true humanism".[13] Bultmann, far from acceding to Strauss' claim that the denial of natural law leads to nihilism and anarchism, contends that historicism is the true interpretation of the Christian doctrine. Moreover, both Croce and Collingwood demonstrate their opposition to the kind of speculative philosophy of history supposedly practised by Hegel and Marx. Croce criticizes Hegel for developing

the theory of the dialectic and of the identity of history and philosophy into "a sterile attempt to resolve history into an abstractly conceived philosophy, having for result a corruption and maiming on both sides"[14] -- an attempt in which philosophy and history "become fixed in a definitive philosophy, so that in fact . . . thought must needs come to an end and die, since it can only not die by developing perpetually".[15] To Croce, this is an utterly untenable conclusion. He was himself, he says, "a rebel by reason of [his] love of history":[16] he refused to follow "orthodox" Hegelianism in attempting to fit history into an a priori dialectic, since he saw history as the expression of the thought of essentially free human individuals.

There is, indeed, much in common between these authors and Popper and Hayek themselves. Lee and Beck, who are sceptical of the Popper-Hayek characterization of historicism, have even contended that "Popper's own description of historicism makes him an historicist himself within certain meanings of the word".[17] And Meyerhoff, too, who dubs Popper's usage of 'historicism' as "somewhat odd and misleading" -- and as "[having] nothing to do with the movement of historicism as defined and analyzed in the classic work of Friedrich Meinecke nor with the modern historicism of Dilthey and his successors [inter alia, Croce, Collingwood and Ortega]" — considers Popper "a member of the same movement".[18] And much the same may be said of Hayek. The opening sentences of the latter's essay on Comte and Hegel might even be considered the epitome of historicist thinking:

> The discussions [he says] of every age are filled with the issues on which its leading schools of

> thought differ. But the general intellectual atmosphere of the time is always determined by the views on which the opposing schools agree. They become the unspoken presuppositions of all thought, the common and unquestioningly accepted foundations on which all discussion proceeds.[19]

There is much justification for the contention that Popper and Hayek are historicists of a kind. Indeed, it would be argued that not only Popper's conjecturalism but also Marxism, Existentialism, Analytical Philosophy and other current systems are, in the Sartrean terminology, mere ideologies, whereas historicism is the central philosophy of the twentieth century.[20] There do, of course, appear to be radical divergences between the metaphysics of Popper and Hayek and of certain central historicists. If this were not so, it would be difficult to imagine how Popper and Hayek could launch such a sustained attack on the works of those we are claiming are their intellectual cousins. But this is no more surprising than the fact that Croce and Collingwood have, for example, criticized other historicist writers, inter alia, Hegel and Spengler. Moreover, in doing so, they have anticipated several of the arguments of Popper and Hayek. (Indeed, the final disproof of "historicism", with which Popper prefaces the later editions of The Poverty of Historicism, can be found in almost identical form in Croce and Collingwood -- and this is an argument against predictionism.[21]) What is important is not so much what the various authors say that is different but what it is on which they all agree, if anything, and the implications of those things on which they all agree.

We have spoken time and again of the historicist doctrine or

doctrines; but if this comment about historicism being a philosophy rather than an ideology is correct, then it becomes at once obvious why it is difficult to offer any clear and concise formulation of the doctrine[s] in question. The fundamental ideas of historicism may run through many apparently divergent schools of thought and may undergo many and varied interpretations. It would be as difficult to say what historicism is as it would be to say what, e.g., empiricism or rationalism is. These philosophies, too, served as the basis of sometimes violent disagreements between schools of thought essentially committed to the same ideas. Although it may seem difficult to reconcile the Popper-Hayek view of historicism as holist, deterministic and totalitarian with the Croce-Collingwood-Bultmann view of it as a liberal-Christian philosophy -- or with Popper's and Hayek's own historicism -- or to reconcile any of these with the Sartrean view, so open to the kinds of objections suggested by Strauss and Barraclough, of man as radically responsible, all of these do stem from a common set of presuppositions about the world and man's place in it. The major problem is that any characterization of historicism is likely to be only partial, to highlight only some aspects of it. This is certainly true of the characterization given by Popper and Hayek. But it is also true that any characterization, no matter how brief, can suggest connections and implications of the common set of presuppositions of historicism. For example, some justification of the Popper-Hayek characterization — or, at least, some reflection of it -- is also found in Feibleman's article in Runes' Dictionary of Philosophy. Historicism, says Feibleman, is:

> The view that the history of anything is a sufficient

> explanation of it, that the value of anything can be accounted for through the discovery of its origins, that the nature of anything is entirely comprehended in its development, as for example, that the properties of an oak tree are entirely accounted for by an exhaustive description of its development from an acorn.[22]

This definition does contain suggestions of those Aristotelian roots of historicism which Popper pretends to unearth in The Poverty of Historicism and The Open Society and Its Enemies: suggestions also of laws of development and of a concern with values. If such a theory were applied to the social sciences, it might well lead to the kind of view that Popper and Hayek are at such pains to combat. A similar account is given by Mandelbaum:

> Historicism [he says] is the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of anything and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained by considering it in terms of the place it occupied and the role it played within a process of development.[23]

Yet Mandelbaum maintains that, although the central themes of historicism as it is represented by Popper and Hayek are intimately connected with doctrines that are generally regarded as historicist, "there seems no necessity for identifying historicism with holistic thought and with the belief in the possibility of prediction"![24]

This comment of Mandelbaum's raises the question which Popper wished to avoid, namely, what was essential to historicism and what was, perhaps, merely associated with it or consupponible with it or tangential to it. But, although there may seem only a tenuous connection between historical development and talk of totalitarianism, holism

and predictionism, this should not be taken to prove that the criticisms levelled by Popper and Hayek are not valid against any historicist positions other than their own "man of straw". For it is possible that even historicists who explicitly disavow any predictionist or holist theses do actually espouse doctrines that would imply such theses.

What seems to distinguish Popper and Hayek in particular from most neo-historicists is not that the former are believers in liberty and individualism whilst the latter are believers in repression and collectivism: what seems to distinguish them is the lengths to which the belief in individuality is pressed, both methodologically and ontologically. "The essence of historism," says Meinecke, "is the substitution of a process of individualizing observation for a generalizing view of human forces."[25] (This initially suggests a move in the opposite direction to that observed by Popper and Hayek.) The difference between the liberal approach of Popper and Hayek, Strauss and Barraclough and the thorough-going historicists can be appreciated by a consideration of the quotations from Feibleman and Mandelbaum. These immediately suggest a kinship between the doctrine of historicism and the theory of evolution in biology. The idea of the variability and development of human values and world-views is an empirical idea. Historical, sociological and anthropological investigations provide us with evidence that there are and have been immensely varied systems of value and truth in different periods and in different cultures. Those investigations also demonstrate that these systems undergo change through time and that this change is not random but developmental. In the light of the empirical findings, traditional liberalism has taken one or both of two lines: (1) To maintain that all values

are fundamentally dependent on natural law and that all truth is dependent on the application of a natural light of reason; or (2) To maintain that there is a progress and a cumulation in our grasp of the truths of morality and science. This is at once a most reassuring belief and the greatest of conceits. As Meinecke says:

> We can hardly imagine what this concept of Natural Law has meant for Western man for almost the last two thousand years, whether in its Christian form, or in the secular form that has emerged again since the Renaissance. It was a fixed Polestar in the midst of all the storms of the world's history. It gave thoughtful men an absolute anchorage in life, all the stronger if it was crowned by the Christian belief in revelation. It could be applied to the most varied ideologies, even those that were strongly conflicting. Human reason, taken to be eternal and timeless, was held to justify them all, without it being noticed that in the process reason itself lost its timeless character and showed what it really was -- a power that was as mutable as history and constantly took on new and individual forms.[26]

Natural law and natural light of reason were the liberal's escape from any true individualism and freedom. Although they would criticize the determinists for making man the slave of of mindless historical development and the "historicists" for inducing cynicism, they were themselves more guilty in making men the slave of absolute truth and absolute human nature and to a belief that man's reason would progressively achieve truth -- or would achieve it, if only reason could overcome the defects of the erring will; since, according to the theory of the natural light of reason, only such defects could explain

why earliest man had not achieved total truth.[27] Man is not free on this liberalist view: he is the slave of an unchanging human nature. It is natural law and natural light of reason theories that release man from his responsibility for his own moral decisions. The conceit of natural law and natural light of reason theories consists in the belief that our own Western civilization has progressed further than any other society, that other societies are to be judged by the degree to which they approximate to our own. This is the confidence of the nineteenth century liberal: a confidence in democracy and the inevitable progress of positivist science.

Historicism exposes the error of this faith in democracy and progress by pushing the analysis of individuality one step further. It loses confidence in the liberal ideal of progress, loses confidence in the rightness of nineteenth century values: it sees these as representative of world-views on a par with, but not superior to, other systems of value and truth. "'Historicism' (the science of history)," maintains Croce, "scientifically speaking, is the affirmation that life and reality are history and history alone."[28] For the natural light of reason it substitutes the fact of world-views of the various socio-historical cultures; and, hence, emphasizes the historical relativity of values and truths. For the accumulation of truth it substitutes Ranke's maxim that all epochs are next to God; and, since there is no transhistorical criterion of truth, the social whole becomes important as the "keeper" and sole judge of truth. The Humean idea that if one wishes to understand the English and the French, one should study the Greeks and the Romans -- an idea which dominated traditional histories -- has been replaced with

the idea that one should study historical events for what they really were, not as projections of our own society back in time. As Croce has pointed out:

> To know (to judge) an event is to think of it in its being, and therefore in its birth and development among conditions themselves altering and developing, since its being can only lie in the course and development of life. It would be useless to try to think of it outside this life.[29]

In the history of philosophy, for example, this change in attitude is reflected in the rejection of the traditional smörgasbörd approach to philosophical systems and an attempt to replace this with a more thorough understanding of such systems within their historical context. The quotation from Croce may be reminiscent of the Feibleman-Mandelbaum definition of 'historicism', but it shows that definition in a totally different perspective. Croce is affirming the historical nature of man and insisting that historical events be studied for what they are. (Note: Croce here gives a necessary condition for historical knowledge, not a sufficient condition as is maintained by Feibleman and Mandelbaum.)

This relativization of morality and virtue has not always driven its proponents to cynicism about the human condition. Indeed, it is often regarded as the discovery of man's true freedom. "It is comic in the extreme," says Ortega, for example, "that historicism should be condemned because it produces or corroborates in us the consciousness that the human factor is changeable in its every direction, that in it there is nothing concrete that is stable. As if the stable being -- the stone, for instance -- were preferable to the unstable."[30]

Moreover, it is this view of man and history that leads to one of the central claims of many historicists, viz., that the methods appropriate to the historical sciences are necessarily different from those which are appropriate to the natural sciences, the view which Popper terms 'anti-naturalistic'. It leads also to what Croce calls 'absolute historicism', that is, to the acceptance of the Hegelian identification of history with philosophy.[31] According to the historicist position: "We are first of all historical beings and, after that, contemplators of history; only because we are the one do we become the other."[32] Since all historical events and actions are seen as the result or expression of human thought and values, of a philosophy or a Weltanschauung, we find ourselves in a peculiar position with respect to the study of these events, a position which is impossible with respect to mere physical events. As historical beings ourselves, we can appreciate the relation between the events and actions and the world-view that they reflect: we can, as Hayek himself has it, "look at the world of society from the inside".[33] What is more, man's historicality is seen as implying that he must interpret his own world and determine his own values and projects within that world. It is this that necessitates the Hegelian identification of history with philosophy, because philosophy represents the crystallization of man's thought about his world, represents his fundamental view of the world at any given time, his world-view. Moreover, the necessity of interpreting the world carries with it implications which suggest that, from the point of view of the logic of history, an epistemology and an ontology embracing speculative philosophy of history, holism and "irrationalism" is required.

If historicism is regarded as the constellation of predictionism, holism, historical relativism and absolute historicism, then Popper and Hayek, Strauss and Barraclough are justified in questioning the elements of this constellation that they do: it is these elements which prove such a shock to traditional ideas and ideals. If the natural light of reason cannot supply us with truths either of science or morality, then are there really no such truths or are they fundamentally irrational? If truth and morality exist only with social systems, does man not lose his individuality and freedom, does he not exist merely to express the irrational thought of the social system? If these systems develop according to some inherent principle or dialectic, does man not become a helpless passenger in a vehicle which he cannot control? If there is no real truth to which man is ever approximating, does history not become at most a dialectic without a goal?

The problems are profound not only for philosophy but also for life itself. They have, indeed, produced a crisis in contemporary thought. In many ways, the answers given to these problems, even among historicists, have harked back to the evolutionist theories of traditional liberalism from which they sprang. Thus, Hegel, although stressing the importance of the social whole and of the identity of history and philosophy, cannot escape completely from the idea of some ultimate destiny; the German Historical School of Economics, perhaps the epitome of Popper's anti-naturalistic predictionists, although denying the applicability of classical economic theories to the German situation, still sees all societies as necessarily going through identical stages of development; Dilthey, although maintaining that

"Every world-view is conditioned historically and therefore limited and relative", still attempts to escape from relativism through a doctrine of transcendental truth which is expressed fragmentally, "in various broken rays", in different societies at different times, as do Spengler and Ortega;[34] and Troeltsch and Scheler attempt a similar solution with respect to the multiplicity of religions, seeing them all as the expression of one transcendental religious truth.

The problems are profound, but they cannot be solved by an appeal to traditional rationalist-liberalist remedies, since it is precisely the traditional rationalist-liberalist approaches which originally gave rise to these problems. As many proponents as well as opponents of historicism have pointed out, however, a thorough-going historical relativism is no answer either. Indeed, historical relativism, if misunderstood, turns out to be self-defeating: "Neither rationalist absolutism," comments Ortega, for instance, "which keeps reason but annihilates life, nor relativism, which keeps life but dissolves reason, are possibilities."[35] If solutions are to be found, they must involve transcending liberal rationalism and historical relativism and positing a more adequate epistemological, methodological and ontological structure.

In this thesis, we shall attempt to demonstrate that historicism is the necessary doctrine both for an adequate understanding of history and for the proper methodology of historiography. In order to achieve this end, it will be necessary to elaborate some of the main themes of historicism. This will be done by working from precisely those elements of historicism isolated by Popper and Hayek,

viz., predictionism, holism and historical relativism or irrationalism. It may be thought that such an approach is inappropriate, given the admitted fact that not all of those commonly accepted as belonging to the historicist tradition actually espouse predictionism, holism and historical relativism -- and that some of them even explicitly deny the validity of certain of those elements. What will be attempted will be the construction of a theory of history and historiography involving each of those elements which at the same time will connect them in such a way that, even if they cannot be shown to be mutually implicatory, it will at least be reasonable to accept all of them if one accepts one of them. For this reason, the thesis will not concern itself with the detailed exposition or criticism of any historicist writer or writers in particular, since none of the answers so far advanced do actually blend the three elements mentioned into a coherent and acceptable whole -- and none have provided a truly adequate solution to the problems under consideration.

Since historicists say something about the historical process as a whole as well as about the logic of historiographical concepts, Chapter Two contains a reassessment of the arguments given against speculative philosophy of history and predictionism, especially by Popper and Collingwood. These arguments will be demonstrated to be largely inconclusive. What is more, it will be argued that there is actually no genuine distinction to be drawn between speculative philosophy of history and history itself; and that, therefore, if predictionism is entailed by speculative philosophy of history, then it is also a corollary of the possibility of any historical knowledge. In particular, it will be shown that predictionism is a necessary

corollary of the epistemological position of both Collingwood and Popper -- a position which itself turns out to endorse historical relativism.

Chapter Three contains a discussion of the problems of ontological and methodological individualism and holism. It will be seen that, although holism may appear to provide a more adequate methodological structure and individualism an intuitively more acceptable ontological structure, the traditional arguments advanced by both individualists and holists have been fundamentally msitaken, that neither traditional holism nor traditional individualism can be correct. This will necessitate the construction of a compromise holism-individualism -- a compromise position which can be employed to dove-tail with the notion of the concrete universal and the concrete individual and with historical relativism. Since the arguments of Popper and Hayek are primarily based on the supposition that predictionism and holism must imply a deterministic world of history and society, it will be appropriate to conclude this chapter with a demonstration that both of these positions are actually compatible with the doctrine of the freedom of the will. This will involve exposing the category mistake inherent in much discussion concerning the use of general laws.

The final chapter investigates the historicist denial of the validity of rationalism. Popper's arguments against irrationalism will be considered and will be shown to be inappropriate as arguments against historical relativism. Moreover, it will be seen that a doctrine of historical relativism is a necessary corollary of the epistemological position of Popper himself. A theory of presupposition or belief will be developed, following the work of Collingwood, Ortega

and Wittgenstein, which will account for, or rather give a means of expressing, a general schema of historical shange. This will then be used to provide a sketch of the speculative philosophy of history of neo-historicism and to provide a basis for an analysis of rational explanation in history.

Although traditionally the predictionist, holist and irrationalist elements of historicism unearthed by Popper and others may not have been espoused by all historicists, it will be seen that each of these does result from one theory of the historical nature of man and of the nature of human knowledge: viz., the theory of the concrete universal.

CHAPTER TWO: A CRITIQUE OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

2.1 On Knowing What Will Happen in the Future: Whereas the discipline of history and, therefore, historiography deal in practice solely with events that have occurred in the past, speculative philosophy of history claims to deal with continuum history, i.e., with history considered as the totality of human experience and action in time, regardless of all particular pasts, presents and futures. This means that some of the events which constitute elements of its supposed domain of enquiry have not yet happened, they are still in the future. The traditional speculative philosopher of history pontificates upon the whole historical process, both on that part of it which is past and that part of it which is yet to come. This commits him to claiming to have knowledge of events in the future. No matter how vague or evasive his prognostications about the future may be, he must be claiming to know something about future events. This raises the rather thorny question of whether we can or cannot, in principle, know

what is going to take place in the future. If we cannot, then traditional speculative philosophy of history is complete misnomer, i.e., it cannot be genuinely practised. We may represent this as:

(1) $\{[S \rightarrow (P \ \& \ F)] \ \& \ F\} \rightarrow \sim S$.

(Where S is speculative philosophy of history; P is knowledge of the past; and F is knowledge of the future.) Since (1) is valid, if we grant that:

(2) $S \rightarrow (P \ \& \ F)$

and demonstrate that predictionism is not possible, viz.,

(3) $\sim F$,

then we may conclude that:

(4) $\sim S$.

Moreover, on the Popper-Hayek characterization, historicism (H) means speculative philosophy of history; and the following is also a valid inference:

(5) $\{[S \rightarrow (P \ \& \ F) \ \& \ \sim F\} \rightarrow [(H = S) \rightarrow \sim H]$.

Thus, simply by proving (3), it would be possible to demonstrate the falsity of historicism. Popper has, of course, attempted precisely that. Croce and Collingwood, however, also attempt to demonstrate this, yet they are both committed to some variety of the other two central historicist doctrines, holism and historical relativism. In their writings, of course, Croce and Collingwood do not assume (H = S) nor do they believe that holism or historical relativism imply predictionism. Therefore, they would conclude only (4) and not the falsity of historicism. It may not be thought necessary for these authors to prove that the additional assumption is false, since the disagreement between themselves and Popper and Hayek may turn out to

be a pseudo-disagreement generated by nothing more than a determination on the part of Popper and Hayek to define 'historicism' as 'speculative philosophy of history', a definition that need not be accepted. If, however, there exists a stronger relationship between predictionism and holism and historical relativism than the simple consupponibility relationship -- as Popper seems to indicate -- then Croce and Collingwood may have a more difficult case to answer.

A proponent of speculative philosophy of history has two lines of defence open to him against the arguments suggested. He may demonstrate either that we can know what will happen in the future, i.e., that (3) is false, or that speculative philosophy of history does not involve having knowledge of what will happen in the future, i.e., that (2) is false. Let us assume that (2) is true: this leaves the proponent of speculative philosophy of history no alternative but to prove that (3) is false.

Such a proof, however, will not even be attempted here: All that will be attempted is a rebuttal of the proofs offered by Popper and Collingwood of (3), i.e., an attempt will be made not to demonstrate that F is true but, more conservatively, that not-F has not been proven. This will not, in and of itself, serve to demonstrate that speculative philosophy of history is possible, but only that it has not been proved impossible. Since knowing what will happen in the future is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for speculative philosophy of history, it must also be proven that knowledge of what happened in the past is also possible. It might be thought somewhat superfluous to point this out, but actually the possibility of knowing what has happened in the past, and how, if at all, it can be

known, is crucial to the discussion of historicism. Moreover, it will be demonstrated that the epistemologies of both Popper and Collingwood presuppose the possibility of speculative philosophy of history. Thus, if argument (1)-(4) is sound, then the epistemologies of both Popper and Collingwood are untenable. It follows that not only is the verdict of non-proven essential to the maintenance of Popper's and Collingwood's own epistemologies but that some reconciliation between these epistemologies and speculative philosophy of history is also necessary. This will involve the exposure of the myth of separationism between history and speculative philosophy of history: and, in the final analysis, it will demonstrate that speculative philosophy of history is "a vitally important exercise in futility".[1]

The accounts and criticisms offered by Popper and Collingwood of speculative philosophy of history, despite being directed against nominally different epistemological and methodological structures, have much in common. Popper's criticisms are of a theory founded on the triumvirate of essentialism, holism and predictionism. According to Popper, nearly every historicist that he knows is an essentialist.[2] "Essentialists," he maintains, "deny that first we collect a group of single things and then label them, e.g., 'white'; rather, they say, we call each single white thing white on account of a certain intrinsic property that it shares with other white things, namely, whiteness."[3] Although there is little sympathy for essentialism among contemporary epistemologists, it is not difficult to see that the theory does have a certain superficial seductiveness about it. If one were tempted to ask the question 'Why are white things white?', it would be difficult to resist the obvious answer that it is because

they possess or contain whiteness: it is the possession of whiteness that makes them white. In the same vein, if one were tempted to ask how it is that one knows that they are white, the equally obvious answer is that one knows that they are white because one knows what whiteness is. All that is now required is that one wed these common-sensical replies to the seemingly innocuous admission that through sense-perception one never really experiences whiteness itself but only things possessing whiteness, and all the conclusions of essentialism follow. But if this is the epistemological theory that Popper understands to be essentialism, it follows that Popper does not know many historicists, since none of those mentioned by Popper, e.g., Hegel, Marx and Mannheim, and no other central historicists, e.g., Croce, Collingwood and Ortega, have ever held such a theory.

Popper is not really concerned with epistemological essentialism, however, but with methodological essentialism. If essentialism were true, there would be a proper procedure for all scientific enquiry, viz., "to discover and to describe the true nature of things, i.e., their hidden reality or essence".[4] One may believe, he maintains, that something very similar to the discovery of essences is the proper scientific procedure even though one may not subscribe to the epist-emological theory of essentialism. The methodological essentialist, according to Popper, is unlike Plato -- the proto-type epistemological essentialist -- in that he stresses the importance of change in the social realm. Following Heracleitus, the historicist asserts that there must always be something that remains the same through change. This unchanging aspect of things is identified as their essence. "How asks Popper rhetorically, "can we study governmental institut-

ions, found in different states in different historical periods, without assuming that they have something essentially in common."[5] It is this kind of question which leads to methodological essentialism. The essentialist's conclusion is that we must find out what social institutions have essentially in common and "lay it down in the form of a definition".[6] (How an empirical discovery can be given as a definition, Popper does not say. Presumably, he wishes to foist on essentialists both a belief in essences and a faith in the a priori method of discovery. Since definitions are connected somehow with aprioricity, perhaps Popper thinks that he can have it both ways.) For essentialists, then, history is the description of change, and essence is that which remains the same through change. If this is the case, argues Popper, essentialism implies something far more dangerous:

> For if that principle of a thing which remains identical or unchanged when the thing changes is its essence (or idea, or form, or nature, or substance), then the changes which the thing undergoes bring to light different sides or aspects or possibilities of the thing and therefore of its essence. The essence, accordingly, can be interpreted as the sum or source of the potentialities inherent in the thing, and the changes or movements can be interpreted as the realization or actualization of the hidden potentialities of its essence.[7]

"This theory," we are told, "is due to Aristotle." Hence, we have the Heracleitean, Platonic and Aristotelian roots of essentialism and "historicism". There may be no small difficulty in synthesizing the actual doctrines cited into a consistent and convincing whole, but

this is pure gain for Popper, since surely wind-mills should be constructed in as rickety a manner as possible if one is to tilt at them. It may be admitted, however, that if the various changes of anything are to be credited to the essence of that thing, then predictionism does indeed follow -- as perhaps does fatalism. This theory will be identical to speculative philosophy of history, since the latter does seek to lay bare the essence of the historical process. Thus, in Popper's characterization of historicism, the possession of knowledge of what will happen in the future is conceptually conjoined with essentialism.

Interestingly, Collingwood's criticisms of speculative philosophy of history are premissed on the view not that all varieties of it presuppose essentialism but that they all presuppose a "logicist" or positivist or scientistic foundation. In his paper "Ruskin's Philosophy", Collingwood presents the following characterization of logicism:

> The logical method of thinking proceeds on the assumption that every individual fact is an instance of some eternal and unchanging principle, some law to which time makes no difference; and that the general law is more important, more valuable to know, more real, than the particular fact which is a mere instance of it -- no better and no worse than countless other instances . . . The task of the scientist is to explain facts, and to explain a fact is to show what law it exemplifies.[8]

In this passage, Collingwood is primarily concerned to demonstrate that the aims of logicism are not the aims of history, that history is not interested in general laws <u>for their own sake</u> -- although he

does not wish to maintain that the historian is not interested in or does not employ general laws at all.[9] The methodological procedure that he describes is one in which the researcher begins with the particular facts, and from them "deduces" or "induces" general laws, and then employs these laws in the explanation of different sets of particular facts: explaining means subsuming under general laws.[10] This is the standard positivist methodology found, e.g., in Mill: first collect the facts, then produce the laws or theories. If methodological logicism were the proper procedure of the sciences, it would follow that, once one had successfully determined the laws of any system and the state of that system at any time, it would be possible to employ those laws and the statements of "initial" conditions to predict future events within that system -- or to retrodict past events within that system. Thus, methodological logicism, no less than methodological essentialism, implies the possibility of predictionism. But just as Popper is incorrect in claiming that all predictionists (historicists) are essentialists, so, too, Collingwood is in error in claiming that all predictionists (speculative philosophers of history) are logicists. Hegel, for instance, is no more a logicist than he is an essentialist. When it comes to attributing the responsibility for the emergence of predictionism, it would appear to be a case of the "idealist" blaming the "positivist" and the "positivist" blaming the "idealist".

Such mutual recriminations, however, are little to the point: accusations of guilt by association should never replace argument in serious philosophical disputes. The essential thing is to establish whether predictionism has been proven viable or unviable, or whether

it remains unaffected by the arguments advanced. In dealing with this question, it will be unnecessary in the initial stages to introduce any considerations of underlying epistemological theory, since, although both theories mentioned may imply predictionism, predictionism itself does not imply either of them. Of course, if predictionism can be proven false, then both of them will also have been proven false.

The commonsense attitude to the possibility of knowing what will happen in the future, if there is one, is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, people seem to be perfectly at ease when predicting, say, that Secretariat will win his next race or when assuring someone who has swallowed a large amount of arsenic that he will die. Such knowledge claims about the future scarcely seem to bother anyone. On the other hand, there are occasions, especially when it is someone else making the knowledge claim, that people will insist that predictions are by no means certain and cannot ever be certain. For example, were someone to claim to know exactly what he would be doing at a certain time in the future, there is little doubt that someone else would claim that he could not really be certain that he would be doing what he said he would: something, it would be argued, might turn up to forestall the predicted action.

In order to make such a reaction to the possibility of knowing what will happen in the future universal, it is only necessary to steer a commonsense discussion concerning prediction in such a direction that beliefs about predictionism come into collision with some other set of commonsense beliefs. The most efficacious results are ensured when predictionism is brought into collision with beliefs about the freedom of the will. No matter what one takes to be the fundamental

causative elements in history, be they human individuals or social conglomerates, one would, presumably, prefer to maintain that they make decisions and perform actions which make a difference to the course of history. Such a position would surely reflect one of our most fundamental views about the socio-historical world. However, if one considers the truth or falsity of statements about future events, there appears to be an unavoidable conflict between this kind of freedom of choice and action and predictionism. This conflict can best be expressed as follows:

(a) If P knows at time t_1 that X will occur at time t_2, then the statement 'X occurs at t_2' must be true at t_1.

(b) If 'X occurs at t_2' is true at t_1, then nothing can happen between t_1 and t_2 that will forestall X occurring at t_2.

(c) If there were genuinely free historical agents, then one of them could forestall X occurring at t_2.

Hence: (d) It is either the case that P does not know at t_1 that X will occur at t_2 or there are no genuinely free historical agents.

One can have either predictionism or freedom of the will, but not both. If commonsense asserts as unquestionably true that there are genuinely free historical agents, it must conclude that predictionism is false.

This kind of demonstration is generally convincing to those who argue on the basis of commonsense that predictionism is false. It has, however, one serious defect: If premiss (a) is removed, an equally unattractive conclusion follows, viz., a conclusion about true statements about the future and the existence of genuinely free historical

agents. That P knows X will occur at t_2 may be a sufficient condition of 'X occurs at t_2' being true, but an equally sufficient guarantee is simply that X occurs at t_2. The argument may suffice to convince commonsense of the falsity of any statement of the kind 'P knows at t_1 that X will occur at t_2', but it does not prove that predictionism is false: it might still be argued that there are no genuinely free historical agents. Nor does it remove the difficulty of statements about the future being true or false: and surely, it may be argued, any statement must be one or the other. What is really needed is some kind of reconciliation between predictionism and beliefs about the freedom of the will. In any case, the conflict between these two principles is scarcely one that is susceptible to a decision by empirical means.

There are two possible reactions to the demonstration given above. First, one might insist that all statements to the effect that someone knows something about the future are simply false. Accepting this position amounts to rendering a very considerable segment of everyday discourse unintelligible. Not only would all knowledge claims about the future be rendered false, all future-tense statements would be consigned to some sort of epistemic limbo. That accepting this possibility would have such a drastic effect with respect to what we would otherwise consider perfectly acceptable utterances does not, in and of itself, constitute adequate grounds for rejecting it; it may be that these kinds of utterances are finally being afforded the treatment that they so richly deserve, that people have been guilty too long of uttering a great many false or meaningless statements. It should be remembered, however, that the meaningfulness of these

utterances is just as much a matter of commonsense as is the belief in the freedom of the will; that, therefore, if commonsense is an appropriate court of appeal for the one, it is also an appropriate court of appeal for the other. Second, and perhaps resulting from a desire not to go to such extremes as those required by the first possibility, one might insist that, although the surface grammar of such statements seems to indicate that they are knowledge claims about the future, they must really be analyzed in some alternative manner. This leaves one with the problem of deciding just how they are to be reinterpreted. Imagine that, at t_1, P utters the sentence 'I know that X will occur at t_2'. How are we to interpret this, if we believe that it is impossible for P to know at t_1 anything about the future time t_2 and we also wish to maintain that P has uttered a meaningful, and possibly true, statement? The available alternatives all appear to involve unpacking such sentences either in psychological terms or in terms of belief rather than knowledge. None of these other analyses, however, really provide a convincing alternative to the commonsense interpretation, viz., that such sentences express genuine knowledge claims about the future. Either they fail to allow for many of the other things to which we would normally commit ourselves when asserting such claims or they tacitly involve similar difficulties to those involved in actual knowledge claims about the future.[11]

On the other side of the ledger, there are reasons to believe that such knowledge claims should be taken at face-value -- reasons which are themselves derived from very fundamental aspects of our commonsense view of the world. Consider the following intelligence

report on Charles V's intentions and the forecast of his future actions which was quoted in Perroy's The Hundred Years War:

> The policy of the new king is to give fair replies in words to the English until such time as he has recovered the hostages who are in England, or at least the most important; and meanwhile he will make war on the king of Navarre and continue that in Brittany; and under the cover of said wars, he will go on assembling men-at-arms; and, as soon as he has recovered the said hostages, he will make war in all parts on the English and on the principality [of Aquitane] . . . and he will recover what he has lost from the English and will finally destroy them.[12]

This is an extremely detailed and daring set of predictions; but it is no different, in principle, from the kinds of predictions that we all do and must make every day of our lives. "History," as Ortega observes, "is not a mere series of accidents beyond the control of forecast."[13] If it were, human life would be totally unintelligible and unlivable . . . and history itself would be impossible. This applies not only to the possibility of predicting the course of mere physical events, e.g., predicting that the sun will rise at a certain time tomorrow, but also to the possibility of predicting human action, e.g., that if there is a sharp increase in the price of some commodity, then demand for that commodity will fall. Our lives depend just as much on making correct predictions about the latter kinds of events as on making correct predictions about the former kind. Without the possibility of forecast, we would be lost on a sea of uncertainty: if all were a matter of contingency and chance, we would not know anything of the effects of our or other people's actions. The very bastions

of the freedom of the will, of belief and of action would become conceptually absurd. The idea that men have beliefs and projects in terms of which we are able to understand history, becomes totally nonsensical. For how could an individual plan a course of action aimed at bringing about some state of affairs if he cannot know what the results of his actions will be? Far from it being necessary to eliminate the notion of predictionism if history is to be treated as the study of humanity, as the study of "free" individual actions, such a treatment must indeed presuppose the possibility of prediction in some form at least. The possibility of prediction is actually one of the necessary conditions of historical knowledge -- as it is one of the necessary conditions of human existence. "The Dauphin's past policy," comments Perroy, "justified this vision of the future, which, perhaps not so much in intention as in fact, came true point by point." The English spy may not have been correct about the eventual outcome; he may have been correct but for the wrong reasons: sometimes contingencies do arise that throw our predictions off. That much cannot be denied. (And the usual reaction is: 'Had I only known, I would have acted differently'.) But what would it be like if our predictions never did or could work out? That is what the anti-predictionist requires.

The foregoing argument is intended to demonstrate the necessity of prediction for human life and, therefore, for history. That predictionism is generally accepted or presupposed in everyday life is also shown by the moral judgments that we pass on ourselves and others. In judging any person's actions, consideration is always given to the intentions of that person. If we know that someone was

intending to bring about some state of affairs, A, we do not attribute moral praise or blame if his actions actually bring about a state of affairs B instead . . . unless we blame him for lack of reasonable foresight. But if it were never possible for a person to know what the consequences of his actions would be, it would never make sense to blame anyone for anything that resulted from his actions. One of the costs, therefore, of a denial of the possibility of predicting human actions and their outcomes must be the denial of the possibility of attributing moral praise or blame to historical agents, including our contemporaries: and this surely goes against commonsense notions of what is possible.

It might be argued that these considerations only require a very limited kind of predictionism, a small-scale predicting of the near future, but that the kind of predictionism required by speculative philosophy of history is still impossible. In order to see whether any arguments against the possibility of large-scale predictions are successful, we must now consider some of these arguments in greater detail.

2.2 Some Arguments Against Predictionism: In his paper on Spengler's theory of historical cycles, Collingwood advances two objections against the possibility of knowledge of what will happen in the future. The first objection that we will consider is aimed specifically at the claim supposedly made by Spengler that his morphology enabled him to foretell the future. Actually, whether Spengler -- or,

for that matter, Hegel or Marx or any other speculative philosopher of history -- ever did make such a claim is a much disputed question: a question which ought to be decided on the data available for each case individually. From what has been said above, however, it would appear that any speculative philosophy of history does involve some kind of knowledge about future events. At any rate, it is clear that Collingwood did believe that Spengler for one, because he was giving a cyclical theory of history, was laying claim to know something of what would happen in the future, and that Popper did believe that all speculative philosophy of history was committed to predictionism.[1]

Against what for the present we might consider an inherent commitment to predictionism, Collingwood objects that:

> Just as his morphology does not work at history but only talks about it, does not determine the past but, assuming it as already determined, attaches labels to it, so this same method does not determine the future, but only provides a set of labels -- the same old set -- for a future that is undetermined.[2]

Collingwood's line of argument is somewhat obscure and it is possible that, although our first interpretations of it may but ill-reflect his central thesis concerning the possibility of knowledge of the future, they may serve to highlight some secondary arguments that Collingwood thought also convincing. The first way of taking this argument is as a denial of any causal nexus between the morphology and the events either of the past or of the future. If this is indeed the intent of Collingwood's argument, then, apart from the possibility of self-fulfilling prophecies,[3] he would appear to be quite correct

. . . his statement, however, would also be quite irrelevant. It is true that the theories of history suggested by historians, scientists or laymen do not determine the events which they can be used to predict, in the sense of causing them to occur. No one would suggest, say, that Newton's theory, which allows for the determination of the positions and paths of the heavenly bodies, actually causes the positions and paths to be what they are. Nevertheless, the absence of a causal nexus between theory and events does not invalidate any predictions made on the basis of the theory. Nor does it follow that, just because the events predicted are not causally determined by the morphology (or theory), these events must be totally undetermined. That is a matter which must be decided, if it can be decided at all, by some other means: perhaps empirically. Nothing, for example, in what has been said precludes the possibility of the events in question being determined not by a morphology or a theory but by some prior state of affairs and in accordance with some set of general laws -- indeed, we would expect that they would be so determined. Collingwood is not, however, merely asserting that the morphology of Spengler does not causally affect the future, he asserts -- if this interpretation is correct -- that the future is undetermined. On the present interpretation, that would amount to a claim that the future is not already decided as the necessary outcome of present circumstances. (And even when a more appropriate interpretation of 'determine[d]' is given for the first occurrence of that term in this quotation, Collingwood still seems to equivocate between the more appropriate interpretation and the causal-nexus interpretation, believing that he has shown the future is undetermined in the causal sense.)

A more plausible interpretation is suggested by Collingwood's next sentences. "Spengler tells us," he says, "that between A.D. 2000 and A.D. 2200 someone will arise corresponding to Julius Caesar."

> Well [objects Collingwood], what will he do? Where will he live? Whom will he conquer? All Spengler can say is, he will correspond to Julius Caesar; he will do the kinds of things that a person would do, who corresponded to Julius Caesar; he will live in a place corresponding to Julius Caesar's Rome; he will look like a person corresponding to Julius Caesar, and so forth. But we must reply, this is not predetermining history.[4]

Spengler is obviously not causing history; but in what would predetermining history consist here? Simply, it would appear, in saying beforehand what would happen. Determining history is simply determining what it will be like, what will happen. Spengler, however, does say, correctly or incorrectly, what will happen. The crux of Collingwood's objection seems to be that Spengler is not very precise in his prediction. History, Collingwood maintains, deals with "actual concrete individuals in actual concrete circumstances"; therefore, if Spengler wishes to be an historian of the future, he must emulate the historian of the past and fill in the details. This is what he does not do. (Failure to do this leads to the favourite game of many historians and laymen of guessing which personages today correspond to which personages of Republican Rome and which episodes in our time correspond to which episodes in the history of Republican Rome: a game more popular than many historians and philosopher of history would prefer to admit.)

The quotation from "Ruskin's Philosophy" opposes the interest of

the natural scientist in general laws with the interest of the historian in unique, concrete events. "History," Collingwood maintains, "deals with the individual in all its individuality; the historian is concerned to discover the facts, the whole facts, and nothing but the facts."[5] The speculative philosopher of history, on the other hand, is interested in historical events only insofar as they can be seen as instantiations of general laws or of predictable recurrent traits. This being the case, he is not interested in filling in the details. The fact that he treats of individuals and events in general terms, therefore, would not be relevant. But, according to Collingwood: "In history . . . the individual fact is the end, and the general law is of importance only so far as it enables us to determine the fact."[6] (A caveat is necessary here. Collingwood is not denying the importance of generalizations or of the universal in historical writing, research or understanding. Like many recent historicists, he was as sceptical of what he, most unfortunately, called 'historicism' as he was of what he called 'logicism'. In "The Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", he comments that:

> This abstract universality is sometimes imagined to be an advance on the individuality of history, but the opposite is really the case, because the individual represents not mere particularity but the synthesis of universal and particular. In other words, to see the historical individual as unique and irreplaceable does not exclude seeing it as an instance of a rule: on the contrary it just consists in seeing it as a rule and at the same time recognizing it as more than a mere instance.[7]

Collingwood is insistent that history is concerned with the individual and not with the "bare universal" or the "bare particular".) There is, however, no prima facie reason for the denial that history can deal [exclusively] with generalizations -- suitably understood in terms of Collingwood's notion of universals and particulars — rather than with particular events. History, as it is most often practised, may not be a generalization-oriented science, but this does not preclude the possibility of such a science emerging. To indulge in a priori linguistic legislation as to whether such a science would really be history is rather a waste of time. Just as comparative sociology and economics abstract from particular instances, so, presumably, would such a scientific history. Moreover, speculative philosophy of history has never claimed to be history, simpliciter, but to be philosophy of history. Thus, it is irrelevant whether or not the results of speculative philosophy of history conform to the generally accepted view of what history should be. Thus, if Spengler is treated as a speculative philosopher of history, as being interested in generalizations, as Collingwood obviously does treat him, then it is reasonable to suppose that he would not be interested in the particular, and Collingwood's argument would be misdirected.

What is the relevance of this epistemological point to the argument about the possibility of determining the future? It seems to be this: Collingwood is rather confused about <u>generalizations</u>. There are at least two ways in which we talk of something being a generalization. The first is the sense in which something is said to be a general law. It is with this sense that Collingwood is interested when he speaks of history being concerned with individuality rather

than generalizations. But his own comments in no way rule out the possibility of a generalization-oriented study of history. Indeed, his methodology rather requires general laws as a means . . . and concrete universals as the end.[8] The other relevant sense of 'generalization' is that used in referring to something as being vague or more inclusive in scope. Collingwood's characterization of Spengler's prediction does give the idea that it provides only an extremely vague forecast about the future; and it is for this vagueness, which Collingwood considers a necessary vagueness, that Spengler is criticized and his "history" is condemned. "Ask [the historian]," demands Collingwood, "to forecast a single instant of the future . . ." He cannot do this: he can only give vague outlines of the future, the details are never filled in, the individuality is always lacking.

It is, however, a serious mistake to take those comments which are appropriate to generalizations and generalities in the first sense and to apply them to the second sense, or vice versa. Consider, for example, the two sentences: 'There is a man sitting in the chair' and 'Peter Smith, aged 34, of 18 Windmere Street, Saint Francis, N.B., is sitting in the large, brown chair in the north-eastern corner of room 318'. Both sentences may be employed to describe the same state of affairs. The latter sentence is not more true than the former, nor can it be argued that the latter is more a description of the state of affairs than the former. Both are descriptions: one just happens to be more detailed than the other. Moreover, it is not always an advantage to substitute more precise descriptions for vaguer ones. Which kind of description is most

appropriate depends on what is being done. Imagine an historian describing a single instant of the past -- or of the present. He could no more do the kind of thing that Collingwood demands than could the historian of the future. We are faced with a demand that speculative philosophy of history satisfy a condition that is not even satisfied by historians with respect to the past . . . scarcely a fair demand. If the demand were consistently made, i.e., of knowledge of the past and the present as well as of the future, there would be no history and knowledge at all -- or what we would normally call 'history' would, perhaps, better be described as "fiction", a position that has not gone unchampioned.[9] It is not being in the future that is a necessary barrier to the kind of description that is required; that kind of description is itself an impossibility. It would not be possible, nor desirable, to give, for example, the names of all of the people who took part in the Battle of Hastings, nor to say what each of them individually did on that occasion. Any historian who attempted such an exercise would soon realize its futility.[10] Even the most detailed of descriptions are vague in some ways or to some degree, and the difference between the descriptions which Spengler is willing or able to provide and those that Collingwood demands, and which historians of the past can provide, is really only a matter of degree.

Collingwood's argument, then, reduces to this: Historians are not interested in generalizations, but only in actual concrete individuals in actual concrete circumstances. Ergo, anyone who is interested in generalizations is not truly an historian. Spengler does give generalizations. Therefore, Spengler is not truly an

historian. Collingwood's premiss, however, is patently false, even if we consider generalizations only in the sense of general laws. In the first place, whether the general laws that speculative philosophers of history pretend to discover are expressed in the vague organicist terms of Spengler or in the more sophisticated terms of Marx's dialectic, it remains true that historians, or at least some of them, are quite consciously interested in generalizations. What is more, there is no reason why this interest in laws of historical development should not grow, even at the expense of what are considered traditional historical pursuits, e.g., ascertaining in great detail what happened on some particular occasion to certain particular persons. In the second place, in point of fact, Collingwood's preoccupation with actual concrete individuals in actual concrete circumstances blinds him to one frequent use of references to actual historical events in historiographies, viz., that of informing readers by reference to particular persons and events of general trends, habits, customs, outlooks, etc., in a society.[11] Thus, historians appear to be far more interested in generalizations than Collingwood is prepared to admit, even to the extent of employing references to particular persons and events to highlight generalizations. Yet, surely, Spengler is not solely concerned with the laws of historical development; he is also concerned with the future for its own sake, or for our own sake, and especially with the future of Western civilization. This brings us to the equivocation in Collingwood's argument between the different senses of 'generalization'. Not only does Spengler provide a generalization about the nature of the course of the historical development

of civilizations, he also provides rather general, i.e., in some respects vague, forecasts about the future. If Spengler's theory, however, allows derivations only of general statements about future events, this may be lamentable, but it is by no means damning. It may be the case that Spengler's programme is quite legitimate, but that the theory he suggests needs to be made more precise to allow for more accurate predictions; or it may be the case that Spengler's theory is actually correct, yet more precise and individualistic predictions are not possible within this sphere. (Compare the comments made by quantum theorists on the possibility of predicting states of individual particles.[12]) Moreover, since the primary concern of Spengler is not with particular individuals in the future but with the fate of Western civilization as a whole, there is no reason why he should precize his comments in the direction of specifying the name, place of birth, etc., of his predicted Caesar figure, even if he could. In brief, Collingwood's contention that Spengler cannot predetermine history is totally ineffectual, since Collingwood fails to establish that there is anything in principle wrong with Spengler's programme or that either kind of generalization that Spengler employs is inherently suspect.

We have argued that in everyday life we often do succeed in making predictions about the future. These predictions may not in all cases be highly detailed, but the sentences expressing them are, we imagine, no less true sentences. Indeed, we have argued that making predictions is an essential part of life, something without which life itself would be impossible. There would seem no reason, therefore, to deny a priori that a speculative philosopher of history

can systematize the procedures employed in everyday life to obtain such predictions and to make valid predictions on a large scale. Collingwood's next objection, however, attempts to undercut such a possibility completely, since it seems to deny the possibility of any knowledge whatsoever about what has not yet occurred.

> We cannot know the future [he claims] just because the future has not yet happened and therefore cannot leave its traces in the present. The historian who tries to forecast the future is like a tracker anxiously peering at the muddy road in order to descry the footsteps of the next person who is going to walk that way. All this the historian knows instinctively. Ask him to forecast a single instant of the future and he will laugh in your face. If anyone offers to foretell events, he speaks not as an historian but as a scientist or a clairvoyant.[13]

Collingwood is not intending to class scientists with clairvoyants, and in many respects it is obvious that he sees nothing inherently wrong with historians being scientists or being scientific,[14] the only objection seems to be to historians attempting to make predictions. As for laughing in one's face, this scarcely reflects the actual reaction of historians, who are generally quite willing to give their opinions on what will happen in the future . . . if something is not done to stop whatever it is. This last proviso is not necessary, but it generally happens that historian and others are asked for their opinions only when there is something undesirable in the offing, e.g., a war, a serious economic crisis or the loss of some important football game. The historian may not be able to say

who will get the medals, what the actual price of butter will be or who will score the goals; but he will, perhaps, be able to say who will come off best in the war, what the general effects of the crisis will be and which team will win. Moreover, it is debatable whether there is any difference in kind between saying what will happen and what will happen if nothing is done to stop it.[15]

If this argument were merely a reaffirmation of the point that historians cannot predict completely "a single instant of the future", it would already have been answered: knowing who will come off best, what the general effects will be and who will win is just as much knowledge as would be more complete information about the future. This point can, however, be interpreted in two other ways; and on both of these interpretations, if the point is sound, it will follow that not even the scientist can make predictions and that he is, indeed, to be ranked with the clairvoyant.[16] For what Collingwood's claim will amount to is that no knowledge at all is possible of the future. "The future is hidden," he remarks. "Or rather, there is nothing to hide, for it does not yet exist; it is unknowable for the good reason that it has not happened."[17]

The first interpretation of the argument goes somewhat as follows: The idea of knowledge involves, in some sense, "reconstrction in the imagination", the production of an image of how things are or were that corresponds with reality.[18] If this is the case, then the limiting point of what can be reconstructed, and therefore known, is set at the present, since what has happened is all that can be reconstructed, what has not happened cannot be. Now, it does seem perfectly reasonable to claim that, if a person, P, at

some time, t_2, makes a claim to know of the occurrence of an event X, that he holds occurred at a prior time, t_1, and X did not in fact occur at t_1, then that person cannot in any sense have known that X occurred at t_1. For example, if P claims to know that the Queen Elizabeth sank in 1967, and it transpires that the Queen Elizabeth actually sank in 1968 or never sank, then P cannot truly know that she sank in 1967. It is a necessary condition of knowing of the occurrence of an event that some statement[s] correctly describing that event be true. This will rule out the possibility of knowing past events (or, more properly, putative past events) that did not happen, since statements asserting the occurrence of such events will be false. It does not, however, rule out the possibility of knowing about events in the future. One cannot know putative past events that have not happened, precisely because they have not happened, statements describing their occurrence are false. But the sense in which future events have not yet happened is not the same -- there is no implication in this case that statements describing the occurrence of the events are false. If P, for example, had predicted in 1935 that Great Britain would declare war on Germany in 1939, it would not be the case that the statement 'Great Britain will declare war on Germany in 1939' would be false even though that event has not happened. With future events it is simply the case that no direct confirmation can be given of their occurrence. There is, then, a confusion here between two senses of 'has not happened'. Once this confusion is removed, the impossibility of knowing what will happen in the future disappears. At least, it disappears unless the word 'reconstruction' is taken literally and reconstruction is allowed as

the only means to knowledge. It is trivially true that only that which has already happened can be reconstructed. But this may not be the only way of ascertaining the occurrence of events. When it comes to knowing about the future, pre-construction (or prediction) would appear to be more appropriate: and whether this is possible or not is the very question at issue. Collingwood cannot make this unwarranted assumption without rendering his argument circular.

The second interpretation of Collingwood's argument might be termed the Micawber Thesis: it is the claim, mentioned in the discussion of the commonsense attitude to predictionism, that we cannot know for certain what will happen in the future, because something unexpected may always turn up. Why can P not know at t_1 that X will occur at time t_3? Well, it might be argued, either some necessary condition, Y, for X, which was suppose to occur at time t_2, may not actually occur, or some event, Z, may occur at time t_2 that forestalls the occurrence of X at t_3. If Y does not occur or Z does occur, then X will not occur. One cannot know that X will occur at t_3, because one cannot know that Y, but not Z, will occur at t_2. If P claims, for example, on Tuesday (t_1) that he will attend a cocktail party (X) on Thursday (t_3), his claim may be denied on the grounds that his attendance is contingent on his being invited (Y) and that anyway his car may break down on the way to the cocktail party (Z). Since it will be true that P will attend the cocktail party on Thursday only if he is invited and his car does not break down on the way, it will be maintained that, after all, P does not really know what he claims to know. But whether one can or cannot know what will happen at future times is precisely what is in question -- and t_2, just as

much as t_3, is a future time. To claim that it cannot be known for certain that Y, but not Z, will occur at t_2 is already to maintain that knowledge of the future is not possible. This entire line of argument, therefore, involves a simple petitio principii.

The contention that something may always turn up rests on the presumption that in the social sciences it is impossible to achieve both completeness and closure, i.e., that it is impossible to itemize all of the factors which may affect the socio-historical situation or to say what the full and exact laws are that link the various factors which are involved. For if both of these were possible, it would be possible to determine the total set of occurrences that could influence any particular outcome; and it would also be possible to predict which influencing events would occur and which would not. If completeness and closure existed in P's cocktail situation, neither the failure to be invited nor the break down of P's car would come as a surprise. In this eventuality, it would be possible to eliminate the unexpected. Now, although it cannot be denied that in the socio-historical sphere there are an incredible number of relevant factors and an equally incredible number of rules of interaction of variables, completeness and closure are nonetheless not a priori impossible even in this sphere. Collingwood's argument, therefore, is inconclusive.

Opponents of predictionism have often denied that completeness and closure are possible in the human sciences, but such denials have generally turned out to be but empty assertions without any substantive backing in argument. For example, Popper's "Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences" derives its entire weight from

this unsubstantiated presumption that completeness and closure are impossible with respect to social systems. The mistakes that Popper makes in this paper are nonetheless important, however, because they foreshadow more general mistakes with which we must deal later. Popper distinguishes between what he calls "scientific predictions" and "unconditional historical prophecies". And well he might, for the first turn out not to be predictions at all! Scientific predictions are, according to Popper, the only legitimate kinds of predictions and they have a definite role in both the natural and the social sciences.

> Ordinary predictions in science [he maintains] are conditional. They assert that certain changes (say, of the temperature of water in a kettle) will be accompanied by other changes (say, the boiling of the water). Or to take an example from the social sciences: Just as we can learn from a physicist that under certain physical conditions a boiler will explode, so we can learn from the economist that under certain social conditions, such as shortages of commodities, controlled prices, and, say, the absence of an effective punitive system, a black market will develop.[19]

But these are not scientific predictions, they are scientific laws. What is more, Popper is admitting that such scientific laws are in fact possible in the social sciences. Indeed, the aim of theoretical social sciences is, according to Popper himself, "to trace the unintended social repercussions of intentional human actions" in terms of such conditional scientific predictions or laws.[20]

Having admitted the possibility of laws in the social sciences, Popper allows that: "Unconditional scientific predictions can

sometimes be derived from these scientific predictions, together with historical statements which assert that the conditions in question are fulfilled".[21] But normally we would not call the statements of laws 'scientific predictions', as Popper does, we would reserve that title for what Popper calls 'unconditional scientific predictions'. From Popper's own admissions, it follows that, if we do conjoin scientific predictions with "historical statements which assert that the conditions in question are fulfilled", then we can indulge in predictions of the course of historical events. The only reason that Popper can give for believing that historical predictions are not possible is contained in the following contentions:

> The first is that the historicist does not, as a matter of fact, derive his historical prophecies from conditional scientific predictions. The second (from which the first follows) is that he cannot possibly do so because long term prophecies can be derived from scientific conditional predictions only if they apply to systems which can be described as well isolated, stationary, and recurrent. These systems are very rare in nature; and <u>modern society is surely not one of them</u>.[22]

This is a pretty bald assertion: no evidence whatsoever is given that would incline us to concur with it. It is, presumably, a matter of commonsense. Similarly, Hayek states that: "The number of separate variables which in any particular social phenomenon will determine the result of a given change will <u>as a rule</u> be far too large for any human mind to master and manipulate them effectively."[23] But is not Hayek rather letting the side down with that 'as a rule'

proviso? Does he not allow the possibility of predictionism to slip in, just as Popper does?

Popper does develop one line of argument which is intended to demonstrate that large-scale, as opposed to small-scale, predictions are impossible in the social sphere. Although this line does not actually attempt to prove that social systems are not "well isolated, stationary, and recurrent", but again only presupposes this, it may be thought to have some merit. The crux of the argument is that such "pro-naturalist" historicists (and essentialists?) as Mill and Comte believe that it is possible to have laws of historical development, because they confuse trends with laws.[24] "But," as Popper observes, "trends are not laws. A statement asserting the existence of a trend is existential, not universal."[25] This is true only up to a point. For although the statement that a certain trend, say, a trend of hyperinflation, exists in a society may have the appearance of a simple existential assertion, a more detailed analysis will reveal that far more is "contained in" or "implied by" it. For example, the assertion that there is a trend of hyperinflation carries with it the assertion, among other things, that a distrust of financial institutions and long-term investments exists. Thus, the assertion of the existence of a trend is covertly an assertion of law-like statements. If no law-like statements were implied, we could not even be talking about a trend. It is true, however, that even though trends may imply the existence of laws operative for as long as the trend in question lasts, being trends they are liable to change: no trend goes on for ever, or it would not be a trend. A speculative philosophy of history which possessed only trends rather

than laws would be extremely impoverished. In the first place, however, it must be established that this is really all that any speculative philosophy of history ever had or can have. But Popper does not prove this; he simply states that:

> The idea that any concrete sequence or succession of events . . . can be described or explained by any one law, or by any one definite set of laws, is simply mistaken. There are neither laws of succession, nor laws of evolution.[26]

Another bald statement of the intuitively obvious? How does it shape up against Spengler's contention that he has actually discerned a process-law of historical development, a law that can scarcely be confused with a trend? Or with Marx's similar claim? In the second place, even if we admit that some of the laws of speculative philosophy of history are really trends, Popper's analysis still does not suffice to overthrow the possibility of large-scale and long-term predictions. It is Popper's contention that when one is concerned with a trend rather than with a law, one must add certain specific initial conditions to the general explanatory schema "pertaining to the special case in question". For example, an explanation of why "all planets progressively approach the sun" would be explained in terms of Newtonian physics with the additional condition that "inter-planetary space is filled with some resisting matter".[27] There is no fundamental difference, however, between this analysis and Popper's standard deductive-nomological analysis of any other kind of explanation: all that has happened is that another initial condition or set of initial conditions has been added, together with the additional relevant laws. Popper insists that "if

we further assume the change [due to this additional condition] to be large, then it must have a very marked systematic influence [on the system]".[28] This may mean that the initial conditions that underlie the trend may themselves be changed; and the trend will no longer be operative. This, however, is true of any causal sequence whatsoever: once the effects have been registered, the initial conditions are no longer the same. If the scientist knows what the effects will be and possesses the laws to deal with the new situation, he will again be able to predict what will follow. Popper has not demonstrated that this is impossible, he has only taken it for granted that it is not possible. Thus, all of his arguments under this head are only as valid as his ex cathedra pronouncement that completeness and closure are impossible in the socio-historical sphere.

It would be most fitting that we conclude this discussion of anti-predictionist arguments with a consideration of Popper's final solution to the historicist problem. His disproof of what he calls historicism depends on the union of that theory with essentialism. The fact that Popper cannot even make good his criticisms of historicism (predictionism) when it is wed to essentialism underlines the total failure of his endeavour. In his earlier writings, Popper had been content to maintain that he had demonstrated that historicism is a poor method. In the 1957 preface to The Poverty of Historicism, however, he claims to have succeeded "in giving a refutation of historicism", to have shown "that, for strictly logical reasons, it is impossible to predict the future course of history".[29] Historicism, essentialism and predictionism are, for Popper, three sides of the same coin. The refutation of predictionism is seen, therefore,

also as a refutation of historicism and essentialism. The argument is extremely convincing and simple. It goes as follows:

(a) The course of human history is strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge.

(b) We cannot anticipate today what we will not know until tomorrow.

Therefore:

(c) We cannot predict the future course of human history.

This is, indeed, a stronger argument than any that have gone before -- or, at least, so it seems.

The force of Popper's argument can easily be seen by means of a simple example. Imagine a group of social scientists sitting in Ottawa in the early nineteenth century discussing, and attempting to predict, population movements and developments in British North America over the next 100 years. Their deliberations would undoubtedly centre around possibilities of river communications, lake and sea access, and on available and convenient arable land. Their predictions would naturally be extremely inaccurate, since they could not take into consideration the effects of the steam engine which would deliver them from a virtual slavery to waterways and would open easy access to the west. They could not take the steam engine or its effects into consideration for the simple reason that it had not been invented. Moreover, Popper's argument has another interesting logical force. For if we could predict future knowledge, then that knowledge would no longer be future knowledge but present knowledge. The prediction process would in effect become the discovery process. But here a difficulty arises: if what is predicted

is now present knowledge, to say that one predicts it becomes absurd; predicting future knowledge becomes conceptually impossible. Although scientists may be very sure that they will make progress in a certain area, say, in the prevention of cancer, they will not know what that progress will be until they have made it. Thus, a contradiction is implied in predicting future knowledge. And if one must predict future knowledge in order to have long-term predictions about the future course of human history, then one cannot really make such predictions. (It is surprising that no one thought of such a simple argument before; or rather, it would have been surprising had no one ever thought of it before.[30])

To see what is wrong with this argument, we must consider the nature of essentialism. Essentialism carries with it the deductivist thesis. This would include the possibility, once the essence of something were known, of knowing everything there was to know about that thing, including the state of it at any time in its history (past or future). Yet it is not only essentialism that implies this possibility: it is standard for all deductivist theories. Popper's refutation, if sound, shows that essentialism leads, via deductivism, to a conclusion that is logically impossible; and, if essentialism leads to a false view, then it must itself be false. By the same token, any other theory that leads to deductivism will also be false.

Does the argument really refute the essentialist doctrine? The initial plausibility of it disappears once one recognizes a somewhat anomalous feature of Popper's entire treatment. Once a scientist has discovered the essence of something, if this is what scientists are supposed to do, he knows all that there is to know about that

thing. In this eventuality, the growth of human knowledge element to which Popper appeals disappears. If the speculative philosopher of history has discovered at any time the essence of man, society and history; he will have no more growth of human knowledge with which to contend; he will know all there is to know. This will, of course, only happen in the event of a successful essentialist formula being achieved. Until such a time as scientists have achieved this goal, it will always be possible for new advances to be made: for something new to turn up. Since, however, successful discovery of essences will radically alter the position with respect to human knowledge, Popper's argument is shown to beg a very important question. His argument only works if it is first assumed that essentialism is and never can be successful, that at all times it will be possible to make further advances in human knowledge. The same applies to all meta-scientific deductivist theses: if it is discovered how things "really are", there is no possibility of new discoveries being made; hence, if science ever achieves its goal, the growth of human knowledge will always cease to be a factor.

As we have noted, Popper claims that nearly every historicist that he knows is an essentialist. We now discover that he is confusing essentialism with one of the epistemological corollaries of essentialism, namely, deductivism. What is more, he confuses an attack on a metaphysical theory with an attack on a certain attitude of researchers. Since the suspect corollary of essentialism turns out also to be a corollary of the metaphysics of both Collingwood and Popper, it is necessary to understand what the attitude is which Popper mistakes for the essentialist metaphysics. Essentialism

centres on the belief that all things have essences or essential natures, that there is something in them which makes them what they are. From this premise deductivism follows, but deductivism does not imply essentialism. Hobbes and Newton, for example, may have carried out their researches within an essentialist framework, with certain definite presuppositions about what they were doing: Hobbes seeking the sine qua non of man, Newton that of matter. But neither Marx nor Freud, two of Popper's favourite flogging-boys, were essentialists. They did not believe that they had uncovered any essences; they believed simply that they had discovered how things are. Of course, a non-essentialist Hobbes or a non-essentialist Newton might just as easily have made an identical claim. Popper's equation of essentialism with the construction of grand hypotheses is utterly unfounded. No one really needs to believe that there are essences in the world in order to construct a grand hypothesis, one needs only to believe one has discovered the actual nature of things. The same applies in the ethico-political sphere. Totalitarian regimes are not the result of essentialism, they are rather the result of people believing that they have hit on the way of doing things, the correct and just form of society. Now, even the positions of Popper and Collingwood involve a deductivist thesis. To be sure, for them it is an hypothetico-deductive thesis. The difficulty, however, is with how hypothetical the hypotheses are taken to be by those who propose them, how willing they are to relinquish them. One might ask, indeed, how willing Popper would be to relinquish the hypothetico-deductive thesis itself -- or even liberalism. Essentialists may seek essences, yet never be convinced

that they have found one. Non-essentialists may not seek essences, yet may easily convince themselves that they have discovered how the universe, or some part of it, really is. Deductivism may, but it need not, lead to closed, self-supporting, escape-proof systems; but it is not only essentialism that leads to deductivism. What really leads to the attitude which Popper deplores is any metaphysical system at all, but simply a closed mind. And a closed minded materialist or conjecturalist or rationalist is as easy to come across as a closed-minded essentialist. (There are those, indeed, who might consider Popper's own attitude towards historicism, and especially towards Hegel, to be indicative of a certain close-mindedness.) In the first place, therefore, Popper's argument is most properly understood as being directed against an attitude of researchers, not against the doctrine of essentialism. And in the second place, even if essentialism were the only theory that implied deductivism, Popper's argument would still fail, since it is patently circular.

Popper's arguments against predictionism have, perhaps, one major flaw: it may be the case that their conclusion cannot even be stated without contradiction. The conclusion is that we can never know what will happen in the future. If formulated precisely, this amounts to the claim that no one in the past could ever have known, no person at present can ever know and no person in the future will ever be able to know what, with respect to that person at the given time, is in the future. The position itself, therefore, claims to know something about what will happen in the future, viz., that even in the future predictionism will not be possible. Moreover,

Popper holds to this conclusion with a tenacity akin to that of the "essentialists" whom he so despises. Yet such an attitude is only justifiable if predictionism itself can be shown to be logically impossible. Although none of the arguments considered so far would indicate that such a conclusion is necessary, there are certain epistemological considerations which would give more credence to it. These, however, concern knowledge as such. They are, therefore, applicable both to discussions of knowledge of the future and to discussions of knowledge of the past and present. It was for this reason that it was observed above (section 2.1) that the possibility of knowledge of the past is crucial to the discussion of the possibility of speculative philosophy of history.

It is to these epistemological considerations that we must now turn our attention, since their implications go far beyond simply showing that speculative philosophy of history has not been proven to be impossible. In effect, they demonstrate that speculative philosophy of history is a necessary corollary of all historical investigation, that if history itself is possible, then speculative philosophy of history must also be a possibility and that, conversely, if speculative philosophy of history is not possible, then history as it is normally conceived is not possible either. The necessity of the possibility of speculative philosophy of history will be shown to follow from the very arguments that Popper uses against it.

2.3 On Knowing What Happened in the Past: If historicism is to supply an answer to the question of how historical knowledge is possible and is to posit a theory of the nature of the historical process, then it must presuppose that there is something called 'history', i.e., that certain things did happen in the past, and that it is the task of the historian to establish and relate what it was that did happen in the past, i.e., to perform historical research and to compose historiographies. Such a distinction between history and historiography seems perfectly sensible and in no way problematic. Indeed, it surely represents one of our most commonsense attitudes about history and the task of the historian.[1] Yet no sooner is that distinction made than it becomes necessary to defend it, and to defend it at that against attack from a most unexpected quarter, since the attacks that have been launched against the distinction can be traced back to views themselves derived from historicist doctrines. According to the distinction, history comprises all or some of those events which have happened in the past: historical events are irrevocably in the past. Historiography, on the other hand, represents attempts to reconstruct what happened in the past. Hence, historiography, unlike history, may continue to exist even in the present, and is composed in a present which is necessarily its own. There are, however, a number of related views that militate against this distinction: views which hold that either historical events are not in the past at all, but are in some sense in the present, or that historical events are somehow so bound up with the present as to make the distinction between history and historiography totally untenable. Comments which apparently support this view can be found in Croce, Collingwood and

even Popper. "Ogni storia," writes Croce, "è storia contemporanea." And Collingwood is expanding on this point when he contends that: "[E]very age must write history afresh. Everyone brings his own mind to the study of history, and approaches it from the point of view characteristic of himself and his generation."[3] Elsewhere Collingwood even maintains that history, as the course of events itself, does not exist.[4] Popper is voicing much the same ideas when he contends that:

> [T]here can be no history of 'the past as it actually happened'; there can only be interpretations, and none of them final; and every generation has a right to frame its own.[5]

Such comments have often been taken to signal the collapse of the traditional ideas of history and historiography. They have even been taken as implying that objectivity in history is never possible, and that, therefore, history strictly speaking is itself never possible. It has been claimed, moreover, that this view is sanctioned by and reflected in ordinary usage, that this is the obvious, common-sense attitude to history and historiography. Marrou, for example, assures us that:

> En dehors des moments où la pensée du logicien se fixe volontairement sur cette distinction, le génie du langage, exprimant (comme il arrive souvent) la sagesse implicite des nations, se réfuse à l'entériner.[6]

An ordinary language (English or French) which still endorses the belief that the Earth is flat, however, can scarcely be taken as a court of final appeal in this matter. Happily, the reasons for rejecting the traditional distinction endorsed, inter alia, by Popper and Marrou as well as by Croce, Collingwood and Ortega, are somewhat

more substantial than simple appeals to ordinary language: they are epistemological. And it is these arguments which Popper and Collingwood consider most effective in combatting beliefs in the possibility of speculative philosophy of history in general and predictionism in particular. Their confidence in these arguments, however, turns out to be misplaced: it is these arguments themselves which provide the most cogent reasons for refusing to separate speculative philosophy of history from history.

Popper and Collingwood both insist that historical facts are not given but that what the facts of history are is a matter of interpretation. It is true, as we shall see (Section 4.1 below), that Popper falls back into more conservative talk of selection rather than interpretation, but as far as possible we shall concern ourselves here with his more consistent contributions.

In "Science: Conjectures and Refutations", Popper takes to task those methodologists of science who believe that in science we can, and must, proceed from observation to theory. "The belief," he maintains, "that we start from pure observation alone, without anything in the nature of a theory, is absurd."[7] One cannot just observe, observation is always interpretative.

> Its needs a definite task, an interest, a point of view, a problem. And its description presupposes a descriptive language, with property words; it presupposes similarity and classification, which in turn presupposes interests, points of view, and problems.[8]

The relationship between observations and hypotheses is seen as being analogous to the relationship between the chicken and the egg:

> The problem 'Which comes first, the hypothesis (H) or the observation (O)', is soluble; as is the problem, 'Which comes first, the hen (H) or the egg (O)'. The reply to the latter is, 'An earlier egg'; to the former, 'An earlier kind of hypothesis'. It is quite true that any particular hypothesis we choose will have been preceded by observations -- the observations, for example, which it is designed to explain. But these observations, in their turn, presuppose the adoption of a frame of reference: a frame of expectations: a frame of theories. If they were significant, if they created a need for explanation and thus gave rise to the invention of a hypothesis, it is because they could not be explained within the old theoretical framework.[9]

Thus, there is always a "point of view", a theoretical framework, in terms of which the facts are seen as facts, or as the facts that they are. "The naive attempt to avoid [a point of view]," he comments in The Open Society and Its Enemies, "can lead only to self-deception, and to the uncritical application of an unconscious point of view."[10] Unfortunately, Popper tries to avoid an infinite regress in this dialectic of hypothesis and observation by appeal to "unconscious, inborn expectations".[11] It is this reference to the innate, together with his talk of selection and hypothesis, that weakens Popper's position. But his criticism of "pure observation" is well-founded.

The traditional view of scientific method is one in which paramount importance is given to "induction"; it is induction which makes the sciences empirical. The basis of all science, therefore, is the observation statement (Protokollsatz), the statement which describes

an actual or possible state of affairs. These observation statements are collected, and general laws are produced from them. A statement is meaningful or has literal significance only if it is deducible or reduceable to observation statements. The major problem of induction had already been noticed by Hume. On the grounds of experience alone, how can we know that future experiences will conform with past experiences? We cannot use the argument from past conformities, because this would be circular. The difficulty in justifying the fundamental process of induction leaves the positivist with a problem as equally frustrating as that of demonstrating the truth of the proposition that all meaningful sentences are derivable from observation sentences.

The correct manner in which to deal with this kind of problem is to see what it is in the theory which gives rise to the unwanted conclusion. In this case, it is the very foundation of positivism itself: the belief in observation statements. In Hume's analysis, general laws are the result of repetitive sequences of events: events of kind A always being followed by events like B. This type of treatment has a superficial appeal, because we immediately take 'events like A' and 'events like B' to be transparently meaningful. Actually, as Popper points out, the idea of repetition based on similarity requires that we see the series of sequences as repetitions, they must be similarities for us.[12] "We must," he says, "respond to situations as if they were equivalent; take them as similar; interpret them as repetitions." He adds that these can be repetitions "only from a certain point of view", which means that, "for logical reasons, there must always be a point of view . . . before there can be any

repetition".[13] (This 'before' Popper seems to interpret as indicating a temporal priority.) He takes the case of the puppies who recoil from a cigarette after only one experience as going against Hume's theory and in favour of his own. Popper's theory of interpretation has much to recommend it: It does, however, possess one major flaw. "It is," he maintains, "therefore impossible to explain anticipations, or expectations, as resulting from many repetitions, as suggested by Hume. For even the first repetition-for-us must be based on similarity for us, and therefore upon expectations — precisely the kind of thing we wished to explain."[14] To explain this Popper formulates the view that:

> Without waiting, passively, for repetitions to impress or impose regularities upon us, we actively try to impose regularities upon the world. We try to discover similarities in it, and to interpret it in terms of laws invented by us. Without waiting for premises we jump to conclusions.[15]

This expectation of regularities, however, is a part of the innate expectations that we possess. How can the first repetition-for-us be based on an expectation or a similarity-for-us? There is nothing which is being repeated, nothing to which it can be similar. To claim that an answer of this kind can be given is to re-introduce the notion of innate ideas and innate knowledge into epistemology.

Yet, in point of fact, such a re-introduction is not necessary. All that is required is a slight emendation of the Popperian treatment -- one in line with the views of Einstein and Cassirer, from which Popper's treatment is derived. In order to facilitate this

change, let us consider the most basic kind of observation sentence, that in which an object is said to be of a certain class, e.g., 'This is an apple'. How is this judgment possible? First, one must know what an apple is. The inductivist has a simple story about how we come to have the general idea 'apple' and affix that name to the idea. What one does is to take a number of apples and abstract that which is common to all of them, to this idea one gives the name 'the idea of apple'. The same general procedure is followed when constructing laws: here all the like sequences are taken together. There is, however, one small problem with this account. How does one go about collecting the apples in the first place? If one already has a pattern of appleness in one's mind, then obviously one has no need to go through the whole business of abstraction. But if one does not possess such a pattern, how does one manage to pick only the apples for one's sample from which to abstract? Popper is correct, there must be similarity-for-us; but this similarity-for-us cannot come in the form of an innate idea of appleness -- not unless the essentialists were right. In the very first perception of what we call an apple there must be an interpretation on the part of the perceiver; he must see this as being of a certain nature, he must make something of it. The interpretation does come with this first instance, but that interpretation does not refer back to some previous idea or instinct or response; it is simply a conceptualization of that one perception. Since this instance has been accommodated by the perceiver, he can use this conceptualization in future perceptions. It is not just a matter of selecting what is important to us in the perceived object, it is a matter of making something of that object.

The difference between this treatment and the original Popperian version has great epistemological significance: it represents the primary historicist contribution to epistemology, viz., the breaking down of the traditional distinction between universal and particular. If the idea of appleness is thought to be generated from perceptions of individual apples, then the universal appleness and the particular apples become somehow distinct. In the same way, if appleness is thought to be that which makes particular apples apples, then the universal and the particular become distinct entities. What is being suggested here is that there is no universal appleness and that there are no particular apples. Both the universal and the particular appear only through abstraction. The one comes from reifying that which we interpret the thing as being; the other comes from believing that it makes sense to talk of the particular in isolation from its being interpreted. There are only "concrete universals" or "concrete particulars", both of which are names for the same thing, individuals.

It is this epistemological position which is reflected in the passage quoted from Collingwood where he speaks of "this abstract universality" and of the individual representing "not mere particularity but the synthesis of the universal and particular". These comments on the status of universals, particulars and individuals have major implications for the methodology of history -- as they have for the methodology of all science. "History in its fundamental and elementary form," says Collingwood, "is perception. Perception is the simplest case of historical thinking; it is the most elementary determination of fact."[16] The same epistemological conditions are required for the determination of all facts: both the facts of the

past and those of the present. The difference is that with the facts of the past there is the added problem that they are never directly perceived, they are always to be determined on the basis of present facts, i.e., on what is known as evidence. But this is an added complication: from the point of view of the necessity of selection and interpretation, it does not matter whether we are talking of past facts or present facts.

Collingwood's endorsement of this epistemological position is most graphically demonstrated in the contention that:

> Reflection shows in all perception two elements, sensation and thought: thought "interpreting" or reflecting upon the "data of sensation". Sensation here is a mere abstraction, the limiting case in which we are supposed to receive unreflectively a pure datum: whatever we call a datum is in point of fact already interpreted by thought. The object of perception is a "given" which is itself an interpretation of a further "given" and so on, ad infinitum.[17]

Collingwood believes that the difference between ordinary perception and the discovery or determination of historical facts is that "the interpretive work which in the former is implicit and only revealed by reflective analysis is in the latter explicit and impossible to overlook."[18] While his assessment of ordinary perception is most undoubtedly correct, it is not true that, as a matter of fact, everyone has seen the interpretational element in the latter. Popper, for example, whose theory seems in many ways to be reflected in this historicist view, seems to draw back even from this conclusion about historical facts. But the point of paramount importance is that it

is not their being in the past that makes selection or interpretation necessary with respect to historical facts, that is necessary for any facts whatsoever. The importance of this point is that it shows to be inappropriate a conclusion that many writers have drawn from the interpretational aspect of historiography, viz., that history is in some sense "subjective" or "fictional".[19] The interpretational element does not imply that anyone's interpretation is a good as anyone else's, nor that all historiography must necessarily be to some extent (perhaps totally) fictional; it implies this no more than the same epistemological point implies that present perception implies subjectivism or fictionalism. The distinction between human knowledge of the past and human knowledge of the present on these grounds turns out to be one of vacuous contrast.

We can now, however, recognize the essential contribution of the present to historiography. Since the "facts" of history are the result of the historian's interpretation, they cannot be spoken of, from the theoretical point of view, in isolation from an interpretation. Even when originally perceived, they had to be interpreted. The domain of history, as the domain of things-in-themselves, is a meaningless abstraction. "'What really happened' in this sense of the phrase," comments Collingwood, "is simply the thing-in-itself, the thing defined as out of all relation to the knower of it, not only unknown but unknowable, not only unknowable but non-existent."[20] The thing-in-itself is unintelligible, it is the result of an illegitimate abstraction. Although both interpretation and sensation are elements in any perception, it is not in practice possible to dissociate them as, for example, two stages in a process. But while

the thing-in-itself is unintelligible, something definite did happen in the past -- that is, surely, the most fundamental presupposition of all historiography, a presupposition without which the very notion of history would be senseless. Thus, there can still be a distinction between what happened in the past and the historian's idea of what happened in the past, just as there can be between a present perceiver's idea of a present situation and the actual present situation, even though even the correct idea involves interpretation. This distinction does not require reference to such a non-entity as the thing-in-itself. Confusions which have arisen from this view of the historiographical process are, perhaps, endemic in Kantian talk of things-in-themselves: they arise from applying comments appropriate to things-in-themselves to things of the world, things that really happened; all things of the world have already been subjected to interpretation and are, therefore, not things-in-themselves. As we shall see later, for Collingwood at least, the reconstruction of the past involves the exercise of the a priori imagination: we cannot imagine as happening except that which in fact did happen. (This is obviously not an empirical statement to the effect that we can never be wrong about what did happen, but is an epistemological point.) Thus, in Collingwood, there is always the presupposition that there was something that did happen. What this something was can only be established through an interpretation of the evidence, a process which is continually self-adjusting: as more evidence is incorporated, as in Popper's treatment, our reconstruction must be adjusted to accommodate it.

These comments not only provide a rebuttal of subjectivism and

fictionalism insofar as these positions are seen as resulting from similar epistemological premisses, they also provide a rider on certain theories advanced by Popper. As was mentioned, Popper holds that each generation has a right to frame its own histories from its own point of view. His reasons for holding this resemble those given by Croce for his Zanzarra Theory of Historiography, which the latter also uses to justify the continual rewriting of history.[21] "[E]ach generation," writes Popper, "has its own troubles and problems, and therefore its own interests and its own point of view, it follows that each generation has a right to look upon and re-interpret history in its own way, which is complementary to that of previous generations."[22] This comment that histories must be complementary with those of previous generations is mistaken: it is quite possible that the previous generations were incorrect in their theories about what happened in the past. What the historian must do is to give an interpretation which reflects what actually happened. Popper holds, however, that "interpretations may be incompatible; but as long as we consider them merely as crystallizations of points of view, then they are not".[23] Such talk is misleading if it is taken as implying that points of view or interpretations are not bound by truth or falsity, that they are not bound by "the past as it actually happened". Two interpretations of what happened must be complementary, just as "two views of the same landscape seen from two different points of view" must be complementary, no genuine incompatibilities may exist between them. It is true that each generation may find different things in history or different aspects of things in history of interest to it, but this cannot have any effect on the possibility

of objectivity in history: that is an entirely different matter.

For the time being, however, our primary concern is not with the possibility of objectivity in history, but with demonstrating there to be no distinction between speculative philosophy of history and history and with demonstrating that predictionism is no more suspect, in principle, than is ascertaining what happened in the past.

The key to both of these demonstrations is to be found in the relationship between generalization or conceptualization and individual fact. Speculative philosophy of history may appear to begin from either of two directions: it may appear to begin with some a priori conception of the historical process or it may appear to attempt to construct its "superstructure" from particular historical facts, i.e., it may take the line attacked by Popper or that attacked by Collingwood. Both of these, however, are equally impossible in fact. Let us concentrate on the latter. It might be possible to build a superstructure of general laws in history which would reveal the "hidden direction" of the process if there were a mass of ascertained historical facts. One could employ the inductive method: first take your observed facts, then put them together as general laws. But, as Collingwood observes, "The alleged facts upon which [speculative philosophy of history] builds its inductions are never actually secure enough to bear the weight that is put on them, because there is no given fact upon which at any moment historical research has said the last word."[25] This is so, because historical facts are never given, but are only progressively ascertained. It should not be

thought, however, that this leads to the conclusion that speculative philosophy of history is rendered thereby an extremely dubious pursuit compared to normal history. Speculative philosophy of history is an extremely uncertain exercise, open to question at every turn, but it is also an essential exercise . . . and the contrast in this respect with "normal history" turns out to be another vacuous contrast.

Generalization, conceptualization and induction do have a role to play in historical research. The historian must establish some set of general laws, for example, to relate the data of the evidence to past occurrences; he must also establish generalizations -- and not necessarily generalizations exhibiting causal relations -- which allow him to move from one event or set of events in history to another. The elements employed in these inductions are, of course, interpreted "facts", conceptualizations open to revision. But even this interpretation involves a generalizing or conceptualizing procedure. Moreover, even seeing some set of circumstances as, say, a revolution (a procedure sometimes known as colligation), involves a commitment to general laws and conceptualizations applicable to like kinds of events. Seeing it as a revolution leads us to look for other kinds of events which are generally associated with revolutions. If we find these, we have added to our knowledge of the individual event; if we do not, either we alter our opinion that it is a revolution or we alter our conception of what a revolution is. No two revolutions are exactly identical, they are always individual revolutions with their own peculiarities; but this does not mean that we cannot classify them. It is only by the similarities-for-us that we can discover the pecularities. If we refuse to classify the

individual "facts", we could not even talk about them, they would be merely things-in-themselves. We must have handles for these things to be able to grasp them at all; and it is only because we do have handles that historical research can progress.[26]

But as we have seen, it can never be a matter of establishing a mass of individual facts and then moving to a generalization. There is always a dialectic of universal and particular:

> The determination of facts and the using of them as material for generalizations are not two separate and independent activities, one history and the other philosophy of history; they are two interlocking and interacting elements in history.[27]

The identical point could also be made with respect to the natural sciences. The only methodological difference, if it is a methodological difference, between the natural and the historical sciences is that the former concentrates on the general while the latter concentrates on the particular. But in the natural sciences, no less than in the historical sciences, the universal and the particular are "but false abstractions when taken separately which yet, as elements in the one concrete object of knowledge, the individual interpreted fact, are capable of being analytically distinguished".[28] Likewise, speculative philosophy of history concentrates on the general, on the outline of history or on the general laws of history.

The specific type of generalization which the speculative philosopher of history is said to seek is of the type that will provide an insight into the process of history as a whole. He is attempting "to decipher . . . a plan which is working itself out in the

historical process".[29] The claim that this project can be detached from "normal history" can be shown to be without foundation on the same principles as given above. But, by the same token, "normal history" cannot be detached from an attempt to gain insight into the process as a whole. History is not a disjointed and unconnected concatenation of particular occurrences following one another pell-mell. We know that history is more than this by studying history -- and by living it.[30] There are relations of causation, dependence, reflection, etc., between sets of events. These relations are expressed in terms of generalizations linking particular kinds of events to one another. Without them it would not even be possible to progress beyond the present evidence, let alone move from one event in the past to another. Indeed, without them there would be no notion of evidence, since it would be <u>impossible</u> to move from a statement of the existence of one state of affairs to a statement of the existence of another, <u>in principle</u>. The historian must get some over-all view of the series, see it as a connected whole, see which elements in history are important and what the basic kinds of connections in the historical process are. Indeed, he cannot just see it as a disconnected series of events, not if he pretends to be an historian, because he would not then be seeing what happened at all, since what happened was a connected series of events.

It follows from this that, if the "plot" of history is an over-all view of the series, then:

> To read this plot is not the philosophy of history. It is simply history. If it is the historian's work to discover the details, it cannot be anybody's

> work but the historian's to discover the interconnection of the detail.[31]

Unless the historian possesses some over-all view, he cannot in any meaningful sense be said to be reconstructing the details of history. It is only because he does the speculative philosophy of history that he is able to do the history. But these are in no way separate: his doing the history involves doing the speculative philosophy of history. The details, the so-called individual facts, which the historian claims to be seeking are only the details that he sees them as in terms of the plot that he establishes. Those who argue like Bullock that an historian can employ any historical interpretation that he chooses in order to establish the historical facts and that he can then forget about the interpretation, i.e., those who argue that historical interpretations are heuristic devices used only to get at the facts, which facts may then be verified independently, miss the entire point.[32]

The problem is that speculative philosophies of history often look quite different from normal histories. They do not go into detail; they merely sketch the trends; they do not mention individual occurrences; they merely give the general laws; they may simply give a sketch of the important factors in the historical process without any indication of particular time periods at all. "When we speak of the plot of a story," Collingwood contends, "we sometimes mean not the whole story in all its details but an abstract of the story, in which some incidents are omitted and some retained."[33] This is what the traditional speculative philosopher of history has done: he has provided a sketch of the series. But this is not to say that he has

done something, in principle, different from the historian. Least of all is it to say that he has done something superior. He is simply concerned with a different aspect of history, with giving an outline. But this kind of outline could be given by any historian; and any historian must have at least some idea of what the outline would be, since having an outline is entailed in doing history in the first place. "[B]ecause every historian is trying to see history as a whole," remarks Collingwood, "he must form, from time to time, some view as to the character of its skeleton: some working hypothesis as to the things especially worth noticing, especially crucial in their revelation of the nature of the process in which they occur."[34] This is not a comment to the effect that historians must do this if they are to function adequately as historians; they must do this, because it is required if they are to do history at all. Of course, it is essential that one keeps an open mind with respect to one's over-all view of history, that one does not bend the "facts" to fit the theory; but open-mindedness with respects to the over-all view is simply on a par with open-mindedness with respect to particular facts. Just as no particular facts should be taken as being fixed once and for all, so neither should any particular theory of the nature of the historical process. The dialectic which allows for the progressive disclosure of "facts" allows also for the progressive disclosure of "theory". In this way, speculative philosophy of history and history are seen not as separate enquiries or procedures but as interconnected and interdependent aspects of one and the same enquiry or procedure. All that distinguishes the speculative philosopher of history from the normal historian is his interest.

Although we may have succeeded in rehabilitating speculative philosophy of history in one respect by showing that it is a necessary aspect of all historical research, and is only as dubious or as respectable as normal history, it is still necessary to deal with the problem of speculative philosophy of history making pronouncements about that part of the historical process which remains in the future, i.e., we are still left with the problem of the rehabilitation of predictionism. Actually, the rehabilitation of predictionism is a corollary of the rehabilitation of the "grand view" of history; it is but one small step from the one to the other. This is one small step, however, which Collingwood is not prepared to take; and Popper, although admitting the necessity of a point of view in history, draws back even from admitting as much as we have already demonstrated. Moreover, by a distinction between generalizing and historical sciences which is reminiscent of Collingwood's treatment, Popper hopes to preclude generalizations from the historical sciences altogether. This distinction cannot, however, be used to demonstrate that which Popper wishes to demonstrate; nor can predictionism be denied its legitimate place in the historical sciences.

In the case of the generalizing sciences, Popper has no qualms about claiming that the deductive-nomological model of causation and explanation is applicable. According to this model, an event is explained in terms of previous initial conditions together with a set of relevant universal laws. The model is derived from a Humean analysis of causation. To say that A caused B means that A was prior to B and that it has been observed that whenever events of kind A occur they are followed by events of kind B. Since this is what is

meant by A being the cause of B, a causal explanation must take laws into account.[35] (This is not to say that any explanation must mention laws, but only that an explanation logically involves laws.) Now, if one has the laws and the statement of the existence of the initial conditions before the event to be explained has occurred, then there is nothing to prevent one from deducing a statement of the event even before it has happened. That is, one can use the model both as a model of explanation and as a model of prediction. Indeed, the claim is generally made that an explanation is not acceptable unless it could also have acted as a prediction before the occurrence of the event.[36] Popper embraces this conclusion willingly when it is applied to the phenomena of the natural sciences; he sees it as the manner in which tests for theories are to be suggested, i.e., some set of initial conditions known to be true are conjoined with a law or theory to produce a prediction, if the prediction proves accurate, then there is confirmation of the theory, if the prediction proves false, then the law or theory is rejected.

We have seen that causation also has a part to play in history. Indeed, showing why an event occurred -- what the causes of an event were -- seems to be a very large part of the historian's task. Ortega goes as far as to say: "[W]e have understood a situation historically when we perceive that it arises necessarily from another situation anterior to it."[37] We have seen furthermore that the historian must possess generalizations to move from evidence to event and from one event to another. Moreover, what the historian practises is a simple reversal of prediction, viz., retrodiction -- and sometimes he practises outright prediction. Instead of deducing

a statement of the occurrence of an event which has not yet occurred from statements of initial conditions plus laws, the historian deduces a statement of the occurrence of an event which, if the description of the initial conditions (usually descriptions of present pieces of evidence) and the general laws are correct, will have happened at some time in the past -- or he begins with statements of the occurrence of events at some time in the past and general laws and predicts -- predicts, that is, with respect to his initial conditions, not to his own point in time -- the occurrence of a relatively latter event. This is, indeed, how the historian progresses with his theoretical reconstruction of the past events in which he is interested, it is how he validates his reconstruction. Once he has retrodicted, or predicted, some occurrence, he seeks corroborating evidence for it. This may come either from finding some artifact or document whose existence is suggested by the retrodiction or from the reconstruction being more consistent with other known facts than are other reconstructions. From the point of view of the logic of the operation, however, it does not matter one iota when the event being "predicted" occurred. Prediction and retrodiction are but two aspects of the same intellectual exercise. As Ortega says: "[T]o prophesy the future we make use of the same intellectual operation as serves us to understand the past."[38] If the one is possible, then so is the other. If one is not possible, then neither is the other. Since we employ this procedure to go backwards in time, we can also use it to go forwards. All that is required is that we take initial conditions <u>now</u> and use the same kinds of laws to arrive at the statement of occurrences of future events. To deny the possibility of

predictionism is to deny the possibility of employing the identical operation to discover what happened in the past. Therefore, if that is the only way of finding out what happened in the past, then to deny the possibility of predictionism is to deny the possibility of any historical research whatsoever.

It may be denied by some that the operations of the historian and of the historical prophet are identical. In order to predict an event from some set of circumstances, one always gives a sufficient condition for the occurrence of the event. Does the same hold when one is providing an historical explanation? W. B. Gallie, for one, answers in the negative. "In history . . .," he says, "explanations in terms of temporally necessary conditions are commonly put forward when there is no good ground for accepting -- and when indeed there is no consideration of -- further explanation of a more complete, and in particular of a predictive, character."[39] Likewise, Bullock contends that:

> History is always an attempt to explain the sequence and connection of events, to explain why, after the events of 1789, there followed the Revolutionary Wars, the execution of the King, the Jacobin dictatorship, the Terror, and the Thermidorian Reaction. Not why they had to follow -- that is prediction in reverse, and the historian has no business with prediction -- but why in fact they followed.[40]

Yet Gallie fails completely to see that the means by which he intends to establish necessary conditions parallel the means of arriving at causes: from the statement of the occurrence of the event to be explained, together with appropriate general laws, one moves back to

prior events. Actually, it is quite possible to imagine any number of different kinds of sets of events which could have precipitated, say, the Norman invasion of England, so Gallie's talk of necessary conditions is rather misleading. Historians are more likely to opt for Bullock's characterization: they are not after necessary conditions or sufficient conditions, they simply want to discover which events did in fact bring about the situation that they are studying. Be this as it may, even if Gallie were to establish, say, A and B and C as necessary conditions for the occurrence of D, if it were still the case that A, B and C could have happened and yet D fail to happen, then Gallie could scarcely claim to have explained why D did happen. That is to say, unless he can supply a set of conditions that are jointly sufficient for the occurrence of an historical event, he will not have explained that event completely. The same applies to the objection made by Bullock. Certainly we wish to know why in fact one thing led to another or what in fact was the cause of the event, but, as both Gallie and Bullock admit, reasons and causes can only be established through the use of generalizations, and surely Bullock will not allow the historian to cease in his endeavours until he has given a sufficient reason for one thing leading to another. It matters not whether one begins before or after the event to be "explained", the procedure remains the same and the demand for sufficient conditions for events -- or the giving of sufficient conditions for events -- obtains in all cases. Historians may in practice never arrive at sufficient conditions for any historical event, but this does not alter their procedure for trying.

Prediction does, however, suffer from one drawback which is not

present in retrodiction. It is admitted that the statements of the facts from which we begin are not completely determined and that the laws relating kinds of events are not always precise -- that they are not even always correct. This affects the historian no less than the prophet. But the historian has one supreme advantage over the prophet: he can call upon independent evidence for the occurrence of the events that he has retrodicted. For example, his retrodiction may lead him to believe that artifacts of a certain kind may be discovered in a certain place -- as was the case in Collingwood's theory about the Roman wall.[41] If a search does uncover such artifacts, then the historian will have additional grounds for believing his reconstruction to be correct. The prophet has only his theory and the present circumstances from which to work. In practice, this reduces the predictionist's hopes of success considerably. He really is in the position of never knowing whether even the very least of his "reconstructions" is correct.

This position is aggrevated by the fact that the "outline" that speculative philosophers of history may provide need not lend themselves readily to long-term predictions anyway. Writers like Comte or Voltaire who envisage history as the story of a progression through some definite, finite series of stages may quite easily proffer long-term predictions. But writers like Toynbee and Spengler who give a picture of the fundamental nature of the development of societies, individually rather than in series, are in the difficult position of requiring always the initial conditions describing the state of a society before they can prediction what will occur in that society. Their theories are rather like the theory of relativity in their

scope: they are of little use in prediction in and of themselves but require laws and theories of more limited scope and definite initial conditions before they can be really effective. And the general views entertained by historians may be just as inefficient. For example, an historian who approaches his subject matter with the theory that "The relations of groups of men to plots of land form the basic content of political history" or that "Man's whole life is one continual exercise of self-love", may be in a very poor position to make meaningful predictions. Moreover, the kind of laws which are the most important for the normal historian -- those of limited scope, those which will be employed to fill in the details -- may be laws which are applicable only within specific historical contexts, within specific socio-historical systems. All in all, this limits considerably what the predictionist can achieve. The prediction of the general outline of the immediate future will be possible, but long-term predictions -- unless one possesses a comprehensive process theory -- will be more hazardous. "A Roman of the second century before Christ," comments Ortega in a Spenglerian vein, "could not foresee the individual destiny which was the life of Caesar; but he could have prophesied that the first century before Christ would be a 'Caesarean' age."[42] Predictions for the more distant future would necessarily be premissed on even scantier data: both factual premisses and law statements would be less certain. The historian, on the other hand, can reconstruct the laws he needs from a study of the society with which he is concerned, even though they are no longer applicable in our own time and society; and he can employ independent evidence for the establishment of his factual data. Thus, although the pro-

cedures of prediction and retrodiction may be identical, the practical success of the former is less assured.

This, of course, is of little importance: the point that we are attempting to establish is a theoretical one, the inseparability of speculative philosophy of history and normal history. Whether the speculations of historians or philosophers of history can in practice provide adequate predictions is immaterial. Indeed, our own theory of the basic nature of the historical process will provide very little in the way of long-term predictions. Most importantly of all, the inseparability of speculative philosophy of history and normal history can be seen to be implied even in the works of Collingwood and Popper.

Popper's attempt to avoid the consequences of his general approach is transparently futile. He claims that the natural sciences alone are interested in general laws, that the historical sciences are only interested in specific events.

> From our point of view [he says], there can be no historical laws. Generalizations belong simply to a different line of interest, sharply to be distinguished from that interest in specific events and their causal explanation which is the business of history.[43]

What the primary interest of the one type of science as opposed to the other is, however, can be of no methodological significance in this issue. The historian may not be interested in laws, but he must have recourse to them: they occur in his thinking and are represented in his writings. As for the "theories or universal laws", Popper at one point even denies their existence in history: "But in history we

have no such unifying theories; or, rather, the host of trivial universal laws we use are taken for granted; they are practically without interest, and totally unable to bring order into the subject matter."[44] This claim verges on the absurd; it is cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. It does not matter how trivial the laws are; if they are there, then they are there. Moreover, as for not bringing order into the subject matter, there is order; and we have seen that the order is always brought in by the historian imposing some provisional theory. Had not Popper himself stressed the necessity of interpretation? His problem here seems to be that he substitutes 'point of view' for 'interpretation' and endows the notion of a point of view with rather peculiar properties. But if there is no order brought into the subject matter, then quite simply there would be no possibility of history at all -- and that surely is not a conclusion that Popper would endorse.

As if recognizing his inconsistency, Popper tries next to claim that the theories in history are generally circular and, therefore, are "unscientific".[45] Again, the point is not how good or how poor the actual theories are. From the point of view of methodology, it is simply a matter of whether theories are necessary or not. Any putative explanation, good or bad, must have the same structure as Popper lays down in the D-N model. Some people give atrocious explanations, but this does not mean they they do not exhibit the D-N form. Even if Popper could demonstrate that the theories suggested by historians were always circular or were always poor theories, he would not have demonstrated their non-existence or that they were not necessary. On the contrary, he would have merely

demonstrated that we cannot find out much about the past -- not the poverty of historicism, but the poverty of history. But such a sceptical attitude has no effect on the necessary conditions of historical knowledge. Historical knowledge requires generalizations, it requires an over-all view of the nature of the historical process: without these the past would not even be intelligible. And once this is admitted, it follows that speculative philosophy of history and history are two aspects of the same thing and that predictionism is not in principle any more suspect than its counterpart, retrodictionism -- that prophesy and history go hand in glove.

The opposition of Popper and Collingwood to prediction in history is probably to a large extent based not on any intellectual arguments against it, but on the belief (mentioned at the outset of this chapter) that predictionism is somehow incompatible with the freedom of the will. This belief has led some even to deny the applicability of causal explanations and analyses in history, since such treatments are also seen as precipitating a belief in predictionism. The concept of cause, however, is essential to historical understanding, it is part and parcel of history. This should not make us simply deny the concomitant notion of predictionism, nor the possibility of history itself; it should, rather, set us on the path of discovering an analysis of historical causation which is not in conflict with the concept of the freedom of the will. If both of these notions are essential to history as we know it, and they seem to be, nothing can be gained by rejecting either of them. To some extent the foundation of such an analysis will be provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: INDIVIDUALISM versus HOLISM: A METHODOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL DILEMMA

3.1] The Individualist Argument: One of the prime horrors of historicism, according to liberal thinkers, is that it implies or necessitates or embodies some form of methodological and ontological holism; and the doctrine of holism, no less than that of predictionism, it is claimed, is incompatible with the doctrine of the freedom of the individual — a doctrine fundamental to the liberal tradition. The bone of contention between individualists and holists can be readily exposed by a consideration of some typical historical sentences. The following are taken from Perroy's The Hundred Years War, Trevelyan's England Under The Stuarts and Wedgwood's The Thirty Years War.[1]

(a) Charles of Navarre, still dissatisfied with his lot, had resumed his intrigues. (Perroy, p. 130)

(b) Charles, determined as ever to retain the right of punishing his political opponents at will, wished to enjoy that despot's luxury within the apparent forms of English law. (Trevelyan, p. 150)

(c) In August, twenty file of musketeers, sent to take Lilburne alive, shrank back in fear from the formidable presence, and yet more formidable language, of the prophet of England's liberties. (Trevelyan, p. 280)

(d) On the next day the Estates, all but two members, Jaroslav Martinitz and William Slavata, both fanatical Catholics, demanded that the King-Elect should guarantee the Letter of Majesty. (Wedgwood, p. 71)

The examples form part of a spectrum of historical sentences. The first two are paradigms of what liberal historians and philosophers believe historical sentences should be like. The grammatical subject of each refers to an individual human agent; and individual humans are believed by liberal-individualists not only to be historical agents par excellence, but to be the sole kinds of historical agents. Both Charles of Navarre and Charles I of England are performing actions within some historical context and both are going against the main-stream of contemporary opinion. In (c), too, the irascible Lilburne is seen as asserting himself in the face of adverse odds. This factor of adversity is not essential to the individualist's thesis, but it does underline his insistence that it is individuals who act in history and only individuals. As we progress through the examples, however, an element enters which tends to throw some doubt on the validity of the individualist's thesis. There begin to appear terms like 'file of musketeers', 'the Estates', etc. These terms refer not to individual human beings but to human groups or collectives; and if these collectives are capable of action which cannot be unpacked in terms of the actions of individuals, then the individualist's claim that human individuals and only human

individuals are capable of action is falsified.

The holist exploits to the fullest examples at this end of the spectrum. They bear witness to the fact that there do exist social individuals which may contain human individuals as parts or be related to human individuals in some way, yet are not themselves human individuals, although they are genuine historical entities and genuine historical agents. The holist will point triumphantly to the tacit acceptance of the existence of these social individuals in all historical writing and to the even greater part they play in social sciences such as sociology and economics, where mention of human individuals hardly figures at all. Moreover, these social individuals consist not merely of conglomerates or aggregations of human individuals, such as classes, elected bodies, nations, etc., they may also be social institutions (such as marriage or joint stock companies), large-scale socio-historical movements (such as the decline of feudalism) or long-term socio-historical events (such as the Hundred Years War). Indeed, the holist will base his contentions on examples at this extreme of the spectrum where the relationship between social wholes and specific human individuals is most difficult to assess.

The main reason for the individualist's antagonism towards social individuals is that often classes, elected bodies, nations, etc., wars, social movements and large-scale economic trends appear to have a life of their own; they appear to roll along quite happily and independently despite the actions of human individuals. Or, even if they do not, at least some authors have given the impression that they do; and others have held that it is these social individuals, rather than human individuals, which are the proper study of history -- they are the least

unit of socio-historical enquiry. Ever since Rousseau's "discovery" of the General Will which is distinct from the wills of the individuals in the state and Herder's "discovery" of the Volksgeist as the moving spirit of races, the holists have gradually been eroding the individualist conception of the historical process. Thus, in Hegel "the moral whole, the State", which is Absolute Spirit or Reason incarnate, is the proper study of historians; and in Marx the class is a genuine historical entity and causal agent. For Spengler, Toynbee and Ortega the least unit that it is possible to study is the culture, the civilization and the generation. Talk of these supra-individuals has disturbed the liberal, especially when he can see the rising power of totalitarian political systems. He feels it incumbent upon himself to prove these systems, if not logically impossible, at least lacking in justification.

From the comments on Hegel and Marx, Spengler, Toynbee and Ortega, it is apparent that there are two lines of argument concerning the importance of social individuals in history: the ontological and the methodological. The first group speaks of social wholes as moving forces, quasi-agents, in the historical process; the second speaks mainly in terms of understanding and intelligibility, i.e., they are more concerned with historiography than with history. Indeed, although Ortega contends that one can only study history in terms of the generation, he is opposed to any idea of an active Volksgeist. "[T]his idea of the collective soul, of a social consciousness," he maintains, "is arbitrary mysticism. There is no such collective soul, if by soul is meant -- and here it can mean nothing else -- something that is capable of being the responsible subject of its acts, something that does what it does because what it does has a clear meaning for it."[2] Although the ontological and

methodological arguments sometimes become confused and the protagonists sometimes argue at cross-purposes, there is actually a very close connection between the ontological and the methodological. Indeed, one cannot really be understood in isolation from the other. It is for this reason that Spengler, who is normally regarded as being concerned with the historical process rather than with historiography, is linked with Toynbee and Ortega. There is really little to tell where ontology leaves off and methodology begins.

In the face of this dual attack, the individualist tries to eliminate either holistic entities or holistic concepts, or both. He has, however, primarily been concerned to show that there are no such things as the holist postulates, that the holist's entities do not exist and, therefore, cannot cause anything in the historical process. Far from being separate and autonomous, in any sense, even the State, that most hallowed of social wholes, is comprised entirely of human individuals in certain specifiable relations to one another. Moreover, were these human individuals removed, there would not be something left called the State or the Volksgeist, there would be absolutely nothing; if the people disappear, the State also disappears. The whole matter, according to the individualist, is one of misplaced concreteness, a confusion over language and its ontological implications. The vocabulary of history and the social sciences contains nouns which, by some misguided impulse, a minority of historians and social scientists believe must refer to some kind of concrete existents. But yielding to this impulse, breathing life into these crypto-individuals, can be detrimental not only to historiography and research but also to one's attitude to the historical process itself -- including one's attitude to contemporary

affairs and one's own role in them, which is a part of that process. The manner in which this misplaced concreteness develops is aptly described by A. J. P. Taylor in The Trouble Makers:

> The historian [he says], particularly the historian of foreign policy, finds it hard to escape the Tribal Gods. We may remind ourselves over and over again that the foreign policy of a country is made by a few experts and a few rather less expert politicians . . . But the Tribal Gods are always breaking in. We have to treat foreign policy as a block, a solid lump, if we are going to get through it at all. We write 'the British' when we mean 'the few members of the Foreign Office who happened to concern themselves with this question'. Great Britain is made to move with the ponderous certainty of John Bull . . . 'The British tradition'; 'the British way of life'; 'policy transcending party differences' -- the incense of these phrases delights the nostrils of the Tribal Gods.[3]

These Tribal Gods take on such a substantial form of their own, exercise such an influence on the minds of men, that people lay down their lives for them: the Catholic Church, the working class, the Canadian way of life, the Presidency (as opposed to the President) of the United States. And with their ascendency goes the decline of personal responsibility and the idea that men, individual men, make a difference in history. All so senseless over what amounts to a mere methodological notion that is used to cut out undesired verbosity.

It will be argued here that, although the individualist may appear to have a stronger case when it comes to causal agency -- since the paradigms of agency do seem to be of actions of particular people

-- the holist appears to have a stronger case when it comes to the understanding and intelligibility of historical statements. But, since these are two aspects of the same problem, it follows that both are too restrictive, that any resolution of the individualist-holist dilemma must strike a compromise between the two, yielding a theory which is sound from the point of view of both ontology and methodology. What has happened in actual confrontations between the opposing camps is that both sides have expended their energies in throwing mud at the other's dirty linen while hoping to keep one clean shirt themselves in which to parade proudly around, i.e., they spend their efforts in criticizing their opponents rather than in seeking out difficulties in their own positions. It will be argued here that both sides suffer from misplaced concreteness and that what is required is a certain amount of conceptual rearrangement.

Let us begin with a detailed consideration of the individualist's claims on the question of ontology. Watkins, in his paper "Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences", sets out what he calls the 'principle of methodological individualism' -- this principle turns out to be not so much methodological, as ontological.

> According to this principle [he writes] the ultimate constituents of the social world are individual people who act more or less appropriately in the light of their dispositions and understanding of their situation. Every complex social situation, institution or event is the result of a particular configuration of individuals, their dispositions, situations, beliefs, and physical resources and environment. There may be unfinished or half-way explanations of large-scale social phenomena (say,

> inflation) in terms of other large-scale phenomena (say, full employment); but we shall not have arrived at rock-bottom explanations of such large-scale phenomena until we have deduced an account of them from statements about the dispositions, beliefs, resources and inter-relations of individuals.[4]

Watkins opposes this principle to the principle of sociological holism or organicism which maintains that:

> [S]ocial systems constitute "wholes" at least in the sense that some of their large-scale behaviour is governed by macro-laws which are essentially <u>sociological</u> in the sense that they are <u>sui generis</u> and not to be explained as mere regularities or tendencies resulting from the behaviour of interacting individuals.[5]

This latter thesis, he contends, is "well nigh equivalent to historicism, to the idea that a society is impelled along a pre-determined route by historical laws which cannot be resisted but which can be discerned by sociologists". Thus, not only would holism rob the individual of his potency, it would also imply the lack of genuine agency of the social wholes themselves in the face of determinable sociological laws of development; and man is pushed a further step away from having any real effect on the historical process. Against this position Watkins is re-affirming the importance of the human individual, claiming that "no social tendency exists which could not be altered if the individuals concerned both wanted to alter it and possessed the appropriate information".[6] Watkins is demanding, therefore, that we treat human individuals as what we have termed "genuine historical agents" (see section 2.1 above).

Another proponent of individualism, the prolific Marrou, writes:

> Ce qui 'a réellement existé', ce n'est ni le fait de civilization, ni le système ou le supersystème, mais l'être humain dont l'individualité est le seul veritable organisme authentique fourni par l'experience.[7]

May Brodbeck echoes this view that individuals and the actions of individuals alone are given in experience -- and in doing so she throws the weight and authority of empiricism behind individualism.

> Philosophically [she says], the holist assumption that there are group properties over and above the individuals making up the group, their properties, and the relations among them is <u>counter to empiricism</u>. For he holds that all terms must ultimately refer to what is observable, directly or indirectly, and that what we observe are people and their characteristics not supra-individuals and their characteristics.[8]

A. C. Danto, who quotes both Watkins and Marrou, distinguishes two different positions in these authors. Marrou's position he interprets as an ontological thesis, but Watkins he takes to be advancing some kind of thesis about explanation -- a thesis which may or may not be accompanied by a parallel thesis about ontology.[9] Danto's distinction, however, is "sheer pedantry", and it is quite mistaken pedantry at that, since there is no substantial difference between the actual theses of Watkins and Marrou. Both Watkins and Marrou are suggesting ontological theses, but Watkins in addition draws what he takes to be the methodological implications of his ontology. In so doing, he indicates the close relations between the ontological

and the methodological issues involved.

At first sight, Marrou's contention that the only "real existents" are human individuals and the Marrou-Brodbeck contention that the human individual is the "only genuine organism really presented by experience" seem to be patently false. Surely, we have experience of such entities as the working class, the ruling party and the family: if we had not, how would we become aware of their existence? We may be thought to be begging the question here, but to deny the existence of any of these would really be utterly preposterous. If one were actually to maintain, as some ontological individualists demand, that no kinds of social individuals really exist, one would be committed to the ludicrous view that, inter alia, there was no Hundred Years War and no such process as the decline of feudalism, that there is no working class, no capitalist system and no such thing as the family. But such a view flies in the face of empirical facts — or, at least, it seems to. Once the thesis of ontological individualism is discussed in terms of its implications at this level, extreme versions of it at least become obviously untenable. Social wholes may exist only because human individuals exist; but, as Danto comments, "if something exists contingently, it exists",[10] and surely the Hundred Years War and the decline of feudalism, the working class, the capitalist system and the family do or did exist -- if only contingently.

The epistemological claim, however, does sound reasonable; and, when we consider what Watkins says, even the ontological claim gains some respectability. For Watkins is maintaining that human individuals are "the ultimate constituents of the social world": that, even though there may be entities in the social world that are not human individ-

uals, these are always to be understood in terms of and perceived through the actions and beliefs of human individuals who go to make them up and/or have produced them. Human individuals are the ultimate reality. We may speak of the working class, capitalism or the family, the Hundred Years War or the decline of the feudal system, but when we "see these in action" all that we really see is the human individuals acting within the context of institutions which they themselves have constructed for purposes which they themselves have conceived. Even if we consider something as "observable" as a crowd, we do not really see any actions of something over and above the actions of the constituent members of the crowd; it is their shouts, their movements hither and thither that we identify as the crowd's actions. Most importantly, there are no emergent features of social wholes: when people are gathered together in classes or crowds, when they contribute to "far-flung organic-like behaviour", there are no properties pertaining to the whole which are not applicable to some or all of the members of that whole.

The major corollary of Watkins' ontological thesis is a theory akin to descriptivism in the philosophy of natural science. Since human individuals are the ultimate reality of the social world, any description or explanation of socio-historical phenomena that is not in terms of human individuals is not a basic description or explanation. If the aim of any science is to present a corpus of descriptive and/or explanatory statements pertaining to a domain of enquiry, then descriptions or explanations mentioning social wholes will not constitute the kind of "rock-bottom" statements required.[11] That is not to say that statements containing references to "secondary" entities are necessarily either false or meaningless, since, on the Watkins-Brodbeck line, these are to

understood as constructs from sentences which refer solely to human individuals. "The Methodological Individualist," maintains Danto, "is not necessarily committed to the Verification Criterion of meaning."[12] If this is taken simply as a claim that methodological individualism does not share the exact metaphysical presuppositions of logical positivism, whatever they are, then Danto is probably correct. If on the other hand Danto is claiming that methodological individualism is not committed to any kind of "an analytic theory of meaning" or "a constructionalist theory", then he is in serious error. The methodological individualist is, indeed, searching for a Logische Aufbau der Gemeinschaftswelt; or, rather, he believes that he has given one. Watkins' thesis is both an analytic theory of meaning and an ontological and constructionist theory, and it is the one because it is the other. Since the ultimate realities of the socio-historical world are human individuals, it follows that statements referring to other kinds of individuals must be constructs from such more basic statements as refer only to human individuals: they must, as Watkins stipulates, be "deduced . . . from statements about the dispositions, beliefs, resources and inter-relations of individuals". It follows also that, if there are statements within the science which refer to individuals other than human individuals, then these must be reduceable to statements referring to human individuals alone and that they must be verifiable in the final analysis through verification of the most basic kind of statements. Watkins does speak of complex social institutions and situations being "the result of" particular configurations of individuals, their dispositions, etc., but this can only be a minor terminological oversight. The statements relating the actions, dispositions and beliefs of human

individuals to large-scale social phenomena are not general causal laws; if they were, then both human individuals and large-scale social phenomena would be basic entities and the law-like statements connecting them would be contingent empirical statements. This would destroy the entire methodological position, since it would admit the existence of social wholes. The mixed sentences are to be seen rather as correspondence rules for translating statements about ultimate existents into statements about social phenomena, and vice versa. The latter kind of statements do not refer to any separate existing entities, they are merely incorporated into the body of the scientific language in order to handle complexes of sentences about human individuals and the relations between human individuals in an economical manner.

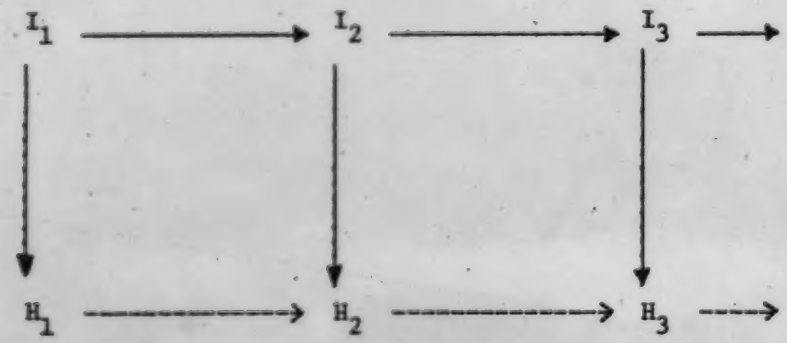
The methodological individualist is not claiming that historians or sociologists should not employ statements which ostensibly refer to social wholes. Such statements do fulfill a very necessary function in reducing the total number of sentences required to describe or explain any historical phenomenon: to remove them would be to commit oneself to infinitely more complex and lengthy sentences in any historical account. Nonetheless, such elimination must, in principle, be possible. Those sentences whose grammatical subjects, etc., are terms which ostensibly refer to social wholes are really short-hand ways of conveying these more complex and lengthy ideas.

This raises the very vexing problem which Gellner characterizes as follows:

> On the one hand forceful formal arguments tend to show that a reduction must be possible, on

> the other hand all attempted reductions fail or are incomplete, and features can be found which suggest that they cannot succeed or be complete.[13]

That this is a fair assessment of the position is partially witnessed by the fact that most discussions have centred around criticisms of opponent's positions. Methodological individualists, however, would scarcely agree with Gellner's conclusion: they believe that their promised reductions can in fact be given. Before we consider some of these attempts at reduction, we should first be clear about what exactly they are intended to accomplish. As a reflection of the two spheres of history, the reductions can be seen in two different ways: we may deal either with the course of events itself or with sentences describing the course of events. In respect to the first, the individualist is maintaining that the real and ultimate existents and, therefore, the real and only causal agents in history are human individuals. Thus, any process will ultimately consist of individuals acting with or on other individuals; any process apparently consisting of social wholes acting with or on other social wholes (or with or on human individuals) must be illusory. This we can depict as:



The solid lines in this diagram, linking I_1 to I_2 and I_2 to I_3, and

so on, represent real causal connections between I-states, i.e., between states of human individuals, actions, beliefs, dispositions, etc., of human individuals. The broken lines, linking H_1 to H_2 and H_2 to H_3, and so on, represent pseudo-causal connections that appear to exist between holistic pseudo-entities. The downwards pointing arrows represent the relationship of reflection that exists between I-states and H-states. The complex of human actions, beliefs, dispositions, etc., represented by I_1 is reflected in the holistic state H_1. This means that H_1 is not a separate existing state, but is merely I_1. In respect to the epistemological side, we may say that in all well-ordered historical accounts containing only references in cognitive descriptive sentences to ultimate realities, sentences such as I_1, I_2 and I_3 alone will occur, but that it is acceptable in practice to express such sentences in terms of derivative sentences like H_1, H_2 and H_3 for the sake of brevity. If we consider sentences containing holistic terms as grammatical subjects, it would be argued that these can be replaced, in principle, by the logically purer sentences for which they are short-hand equivalences.

Can such reductions ever be completed in practice? With respect to sentences (a) and (b) cited above, no reduction even seems to be necessary. These sentences are already solely in terms of the actions, beliefs and dispositions of historical individuals -- or so at least they seem to be. Even sentences (c) and (d) seem to present little of a challenge. The noun-clause of (c), 'twenty file of musketeers, sent to take Lilburne alive', offers no great problem. Trevelyan is obviously talking about a group of men who could, were it deemed desirable, have been enumerated (at least in principle) by name.

Trevelyan would not, of course, be expected to mention the names of the individual musketeers; indeed, the original chronicler probably did not record them in the first place. It would not have been of any historical significance who the individuals were -- unless one of them were later to have performed some memorable deed as a result of having been there. They were just individuals who had been drafted or who had volunteered because they had certain desires and/or beliefs, lived in certain places, etc. But in the incident described there is nothing over and above the I-states: no separate entity, a file of musketeers, would have been observed that was endowed with the potentiality of action, there was only the individuals to be observed. That these men were drafted or had volunteered appears to bring in nothing that would require us to transcend talk of I-states. Drafting and volunteering appear to be understandable in terms of prior I-states, say, of men arriving at recruiting offices, signing documents, etc.

Sentence (d) is only slightly more complex from the point of view of the methodological individualist, but it does give him an ample opportunity to test his theory on more obviously holistic entities and terms. But the Estates was merely a collection of human individuals. Had one looked around that noisy meeting chamber, one would not have seen anything supra-human answering to the title 'the Estates', one would only have seen a group of human individuals acting in specifiable ways. The term 'the Estates' does, to be sure, carry with it the implication that these were not just any men: these were men who had been elected or selected in specifiable manners from within a specifiable social and geographical milieu. To refer to

them as 'the Estates' is a short-hand way of saying quite complex things about them. But the things that it says about them can just as easily be translated into terms of I-states, or so it seems. Unlike Trevelyan, Wedgwood does mention two members of her group by name, Martinitz and Slavata. This was not necessary, but these two were important. First, they were Catholics and believed, as did the majority of the Catholic population of Bohemia, that a strong monarch was essential for the well-being of the state. Second, these two were later ejected with some lack of ceremony from the Chamber, an event which signalled the "official" commencement of the Thirty Years War. That they were Catholics appears to present little problem: it does not necessitate the introduction of any supra-human class, the Catholics. Martinitz and Slavata, with their co-religionists, believed certain things, carried out their worship in certain observable ways, etc.

There may exist more complex examples, but the methodological individualist is confident that he can deal with them satisfactorily. Consider, for example:

> (e) The kingship would thus fall to Ferdinand in default of better candidates unless the Protestant party refused altogether to elect or attempted to impose terms which the new king could not accept (Wedgwood, p. 71).

The first part of this sentence has at least as its grammatical subject 'the kingship'. Does this refer to some kind of existent other than a human individual which might yet act, which might cause significant changes in the course of affairs? Patently not: although the grammatical subject may be 'the kingship', the logical-causal

subject is Ferdinand. What the sentence says is that, unless something untoward happened, Ferdinand would become the king of Bohemia, the kingship itself "does" nothing. And being king does not raise the individual, Ferdinand, to supra-human status: being king means being able to or having to act in certain prescribed ways, having certain prescribed duties and rights, etc. Nor does the introduction of the Protestant party involve any supra-human entity; the Protestant party was a group of men, just like the Catholic party. Where then is there any need for the supra-human entities seemingly required by the holists?

Now consider a sentence which appears to contain no reference to human individuals at all:

(f) The defenestration of Prague signalled the outbreak of the Thirty Years War.

The defenestration, although involving certain human individuals, was not itself a human individual, nor yet was it a group of particular human individuals; it was a complex socio-historical phenomenon. Does it, therefore, count as an entity in its own right, an entity which transcends mere individuals, an entity with the potentiality to to cause other occurrences? Is it "a genuine historical agent"? Not really. Sentence (f) is really just an elliptical way of describing what happened at a particular time and place in history. Had one been at the Hradschin Castle on that momentous day, one would have observed certain particular men -- men known to hold certain beliefs to have certain purposes -- throw Martinitz, Slavata and also their secretary out of a window. Were one to have observed the subsequent events, nothing supra-human called 'the Thirty Years War' would have

appeared on the stage of history: one would simply have observed large numbers of individuals acting in somewhat complex ways, some marching to and fro, eating, fighting, dying, others discussing grievances, signing documents, etc. Were one to demand logical and ontological purity, this set of occurrences could be described in those terms. Of course, to itemize the exact movements of thousands of individuals would be infinitely more time consuming than simply saying, e.g., that Ferdinand's army advanced on such-and-such a town.

In all of the examples so far it has proven quite simple to unpack holistic sentences in terms of the actions and dispositions of individuals. There are, however, cases where holistic entities do seem endowed with either action potential or intelligible dispositions, e.g.:

> (g) The French wanted the league to develop into a system of security directed against Germany; the British regarded it as a system of conciliation which would include Germany.[14]

This sentence does not refer to any easily enumerable group of human individuals. Taylor's contention that for 'the British' we read, say, 'the few members of the Foreign Office who happened to concern themselves with this question' is quite inappropriate in this case, since the sentence is definitely about more than this restricted group of men; it says something far more general about the British and the French people. But the people referred to in (g) remain anonymous;[15] and it would be a mistake to conclude that the sentence is about all the British and the French people, since there is no commitment to a belief that all of the people included in either group acted in the same way. What the methodological individualist must suggest here is a quasi-statistical analysis of the sentence. It is not being claimed that all British people

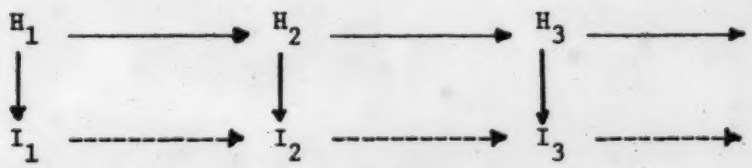
thought in one way and all Frenchmen thought in another way, but only that sufficiently large numbers of each did think in those ways to make it a general trend. The sentence is about the reaction of the "average Briton" and the "average Frenchman", although the average reaction may not have been manifested by any single Briton or any single Frenchman. But this appeal to the average Briton or the average Frenchman does not necessitate the introduction of a supra-human entity, a mythical John Smith or a mythical Jean-Pierre, any more than the notion of an average class grade necessitates the introduction of a mythical student to possess that grade. There is no more here than an abstract statistical convenience. Moreover, there are two reasons why this quasi-statistical analysis is superior to attempts to give totally individualistic accounts of socio-historical phenomena. First, although the attitudes mentioned in (g) look homogeneous with respect to the two groups, they need not necessarily be so. It is not necessary that all people within a group have the same attitude, but neither need those with the same attitude evince their attitude in the same way. There are many ways of expressing, say, the desire that "the league . . . develop into a system of security directed against Germany": some might protest in the streets against the League's pro-German actions, some might write to the newspapers, some might exert pressure on their representatives in Government or change their investment patterns. The concepts involved here are, as Brodbeck calls them, "open".[16] Second, when faced with "far-flung organic-like behaviour", large numbers of people may be reacting to a situation in many different ways, and it may be impossible at the micro-level to assess just what results are occurring; when considered <u>in toto</u>, however, it may be possible to discern large attitude changes.

For example, a detailed study of France in 1918 might have shown that small groups were protesting against continued German presence in their areas, Trade Unions were declaring goods produced in Germany black, members of the Chambre were speaking somewhat disparagingly about Germany, businessmen were making small alterations in their foreign investment patterns. Taken in isolation, none of these actions would look significant and may, indeed, have passed unnoticed; but when taken together a significant pattern can be seen. Again, none of this detracts from the individualist's basic claim that ultimately there are only I-states, that all H-entities are constructs out of I-entities, that H-sentences can be verified in the final analysis only through the verification of I-sentences. The historian may for convenience speak of the French, but what he really means is the people living within a given geographical area; he may look at the situation as a whole, but what he sees is still individuals.

Contrary to Gellner's pronouncement, the methodological individualist, on the basis of such actual reductions, is quite confident that the holistic entities are really eliminable from historical discourse. He will, of course, add the caveat that, from the point of view of actual research and writing, such eliminations are undesirable; but if it comes to a decision between surrendering simplicity of treatment and encouraging beliefs in supra-human entities, he can always surrender what is only "a way of speaking".

3.2] The Reduction of the Psychological: Apart from the positive programme of reduction, with its appeal to the "obvious facts" of ontology and epistemology, there is one overriding counter-argument that the

proponents of individualism have thought particularly damning to the holist theory, viz., that the corresponding reduction from individual to holistic is impossible. The claim is simply that the reverse reduction, from sentences about human individuals to sentences about holistic entities, cannot be achieved and is, indeed, a nonsensical enterprise. What the methodological and/or ontological holist must demonstrate can be shown by the following diagram:



The holist must show that what appears to be actions, dispositions, beliefs, etc., of human individuals are merely reflections of actions, dispositions, beliefs, etc., of holistic entities: either of classes or nations, civilizations or cultures. The individualist contends that, from the point of view of ontology and epistemology, we can never perceive any social whole in and of itself and, ipso facto, can never detect an action or a disposition or a belief of such a social whole; that, since holistic entities exist solely as conglomerates of human individuals, they cannot be ultimate causal agents. Moreover, since properly speaking actions, dispositions and beliefs are only predicable of thinking entities, social wholes -- which, whatever else they may be, are not -- cannot meaningfully be said to act or to have dispositions or to hold beliefs. This individualist claim seems so utterly self-evident that no argument is necessary. In order, however, to examine the limitations of both holism and individualism, we shall consider some of the arguments suggested along these lines against holism.

Perhaps the most popular pro-holist retort to this kind of object-

ion is that individuals are molded in their action, dispositions and beliefs by social forces -- national or cultural agencies. It is because one is a member of a certain class or society or culture that one has the dispositions and beliefs that one has, and acts in the ways that one does: they are instilled into one every day of one's life, by one's parents and peers and by the situations in which one finds oneself. But this argument is, as Watkins has demonstrated, completely irrelevant -- at least in the manner in which it is stated. "Methodological individualism," he answers, "certainly does not prohibit attempts to explain the formation of psychological characteristics; it only requires that such explanations should in turn be individualistic, explaining the formation as a result of a series of conscious or unconscious responses by an individual to his changing situation."[1] There are, contends Watkins, both innocent and sinister explanations of prevalent dispositions in societies. The innocent kind are those in which it can be seen that each individual is reacting to a general situation in the appropriate manner, given that socio-historical background and context. But the sinister kind of explanation is one in which the disposition is explained as a causal result of something essentially non-human, with the implication that the individual cannot help but have the disposition or belief that he has or act in the way that he does if the non-human causal determinants are what they are. One such sinister explanation Watkins "detects" in the writings of Marx.

> Marx, for instance, professed to believe that feudal ideas and bourgois ideas are more or less literally generated by the water-mill and the

> steam-engine. But no description, however complete, of the productive apparatus of a society, or of any non-psychological factors, will enable you to deduce a single psychological conclusion from it, because psychological statements logically cannot be deduced from wholly non-psychological statements.[2]

Actually, it is difficult to find anywhere where Marx does make any such claim as Watkins attributes to him. In The German Ideology, Marx does maintain that: "The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals" -- therefore, scarcely denying the real existence of individuals -- and he does go on to say that: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, with what they produce and with how they produce it."[3] Yet even on the most "liberal" interpretation, Marx's comments cannot be taken in the way in which Watkins proposes: they seem to say the exact opposite of what Watkins requires, or at least to say something on a completely different wave-length.

Had Marx ever made the claim which Watkins attributed to him, however, then he would most certainly have been in error. Nothing can be deduced from any set of statements that is not already contained in those statements. Therefore, if no psychological terms are contained in a set of premises, then no conclusion can be drawn that does contain psychological terms. What would be required for the deduction of sentences predicating psychological terms of human individuals from statements concerning holistic entities would be either that the original statements contained psychological terms

predicated of holistic entities or some set of reduction sentences relating psychological terms to non-psychological terms or some general law(s) relating them. The second alternative is definitely inadmissible, for to what could one reduce psychological terms? Even the most naive of behaviourist analyses would not achieve the kind of reduction that would allow individualist psychological terms to be eliminated in favour of forms of production or the movements of machines. The third alternative does not seem too likely either. It might have the non-choice implications suggested by Watkins and this might be thought reason enough to reject it. But even if it did not have these implications, it would scarcely achieve the holist's task, since it would require that there actually are ultimately irreducible psychological terms which are related to holistic terms by contingent general laws, but which cannot be reduced to such holistic terms. The third solution, therefore, will suit neither the holist nor the individualist, since it rids us of neither kind of entity.

If any of these three alternatives is to be accepted, it must be the first. This means, however, that sentences must be included in which psychological predicates are ascribed not to human individuals but to social wholes. And this is precisely what the individualist contends is absurd. But no weaker claim than this can have any really disturbing effect on the individualist's position.

What, we may ask, would this claim look like at the level of empirical statements about the socio-historical world? It would entail that sentences describing social wholes as having certain dispositions (say, being jealous, easily corruptible or benevolent), performing certain actions (say, ensuring an equitable distribution

of wealth, keeping the peace or declaring war) and believing certain things (say, that all men are equal, that wrongs should be righted or that a woman's place is in the home), are all perfectly meaningful. And, of course, they are! But do they remain so when we rule out the reduction of such sentences to individualistic terms? Social wholes may have dispositions, they may perform actions and they may hold beliefs, but even if the reduction of sentences describing such states to sentences about human individuals is difficult in some cases, these social wholes still remain the products of human thinking and acting. They do not think and act in and of themselves, but only as a function of or an extension of human thinking and acting. The thinking and acting ascribed, or figuratively ascribed, to social wholes in such sentences is really the thinking and acting of individual human beings. Institutions, classes, nations, etc., form part of what Dilthey refers to as the objective mind: they are the embodiment or reflection of human values, desires and actions. A joint-stock company has no life in and of itself, it is merely a reflection of the mega-materialistic values of Western capitalist man. Some statements about joint-stock companies, or other holistic entities, may be easily reducible to terms of human individuals thinking and acting within social contexts, some may be more difficult, but, in the final analysis, they must all be so reducible. The alternative is an institution which itself thinks and acts. But there is absolutely nothing in experience that can justify a belief in such a possibility: never has anything in the socio-historical world other than a human being been observed to think or to act. To this extent at least, Brodbeck's contention that empiricism supports individualism and Watkins' attack on holistic

reductions of psychological terms are both justified. Should anyone question this, we could do no more than throw up our hands and say holistic entities cannot -- just cannot -- think or act.

3.3 In Defence of Methodological Holism: We have seen that the major concentration of the individualist argument is on the ontological and epistemological aspects of individualism. All that ultimately exists, all that can be perceived, he contends, is human individuals and the relations between human individuals. Hence, historical statements, if they are to be about anything at all, must be about human individuals and the relations between human individuals. Any historical statement which refers to (or appears to refer to) other kinds of putative historical entities must, therefore, be reduceable to statements which do refer to human individuals and the relations between them or be meaningless. We have seen some of these proposed reductions performed and they have proven superficially successful. The main force of the holist's argument, on the other hand, lies in the sphere of methodology and understanding. The holist attempts to demonstrate that no reduction is possible from sentences containing holistic subjects and/or holistic predicates to sentences containing only individualistic subjects and/or predicates without loss of empirical content. Moreover, the holist claims that even those sentences which do not refer explicitly to holistic entities, those which are paradigm examples of individualistic sentences, do, from the point of view of our understanding, require reference to holistic concepts. That is to say, he wishes to claim that to understand any historical sentence, there is always a demand for holistic concepts.

In his attempt to establish the methodological case, the holist, like the individualist, can set up his own spectrum of historical sentences, ranging from those with which it is most easy to deal to those which present the greatest difficulty. It must be remembered, however, that, if either of these approaches is to be considered both correct and exhaustive, it must be capable of coping with sentences at all points of the spectrum of historical sentences and not merely with those which present the least problems. For the holist, the least perplexing kinds of historical sentences are those which the individualist maintains refer simply to extremely large numbers of individuals and/or to extremely complex sets of relations between individuals, e.g., sentences about nations and races, cultures and civilizations. But let us begin with a sentence of medium range from Alan Bullock's Hitler: A Study in Tyranny.

(h) 3,800,000 Russian prisoners were taken in the opening campaign of 1941.[1]

No doubt this sentence is about an extremely large number of human individuals -- 3,800,000 Russians to begin with and, presumably, also the Germans responsible for their capture. Indeed, so transparent is the reference to human individuals that we might be thought to be playing right into the individualist's hands by chosing such an example. Moreover, it should be reasonably apparent that the verification of the statement could only be achieved through the verification of large numbers of other statements related to it which would refer to human individuals and the relations between those human individuals. (This would only be true, of course, when the verification was direct and not from some previously written document(s).) Of course, being taken

prisoner is an open and highly complex concept. There are many ways of being taken prisoner: one may be surrounded in classic style and emerge from one's foxhole with one's hands in the air to be herded off to captivity or one may suddenly find out that la guerre est finie while sitting at one's typewriter miles from the front. Besides this, there are many subsidiary and related roles, relations and conventions involved in being taken prisoner. But no matter how many ways there may be of being taken prisoner and how many circumstances, etc., may be involved, there are none which can be verified except by observation of the activities of individuals or groups of individuals. This much must be admitted. The individualist, however, goes further than this, although he may not admit or even realize that he is going further. He would maintain that sentence (h) is solely and exclusively about human individuals and can be understood completely in terms of specific and in principle specifiable human individuals, that no reference is made to any suprahuman entities and that no reference need be made to any suprahuman entities for the statement to be understood. The names of the people involved in the incidents described by the sentence may not be known and may not be important, but they are, it would be insisted, the names of particular people; the capture of these particular people was executed by other particular people even though, again, their names may not be known. The description of the incidents is intelligible without mentioning or presupposing anything about anything else other than these unnamed individuals. This is, at least covertly, a far more extreme claim than the original. For, really, the names and the individuality of these people is totally irrelevant. What is most certainly relevant is that the people captured were Russian soldiers and that

their captors were German soldiers and that Russia and Germany were at war. The holist would argue that without an understanding of this the sentence would make no sense at all.

How does the individualist deal with this problem? Does he even recognize it as a problem? An attempt would be made, no doubt, to unpack the notion of being a Russian or a German soldier in a manner analogous to that employed in dealing with a person being a member of a file of musketeers. It would, presumably, be recognized that being a Russian consists in more than being a native of some geographical area. But what more is involved? Is it simply a matter of having been born in that area (and, perhaps, still being a resident of it) and in addition having one's birth registered there and having a passport and/or other identification papers issued by some person or some group of people? The musketeer example might suggest so; and, if it were, then the individualist would have little difficulty in coping with the problem. It is, however, only superficially acceptable to posit an identity between being Russian and being born or resident within a given geographical area and/or having pieces of paper signed by some other person(s) born or resident in that same geographical area. To begin with, a person may have been born within that geographical area known as Russia and still not be a Russian (he might be the child of, say, a Canadian diplomat) or might not have been born within that area and might be a Russian. The concept of being a Russian is extremely open: and what complicates matters even more is that it is not co-extensive with being a Russian citizen. It is, perhaps, only the idea of someone being a Russian citizen that is to be understood in terms of names and signatures and seals on documents. For example, Mr Kim Philby is a Russian citizen of good

standing but he is not a Russian, while twenty years ago a large percentage of Paris taxi-drivers were Russians but were not Russian citizens. It may be quite simple to specify the criteria for someone being a Russian citizen, but criteria for someone being a Russian are somewhat more difficult.

It may be argued that, with respect to the sentence under consideration, it is only the idea of being a Russian citizen that is relevant to an understanding of that sentence, that the more nebulous idea of someone being a Russian is not required for an adequate understanding of the sentence and that, moreover, the former idea <u>can</u> be unpacked without loss of content in terms of birth, residence and registration. Yet, even for such a restricted claim, the individualist cannot make out his case successfully. What is important about the area called Russia is not a matter of geography: the area is a national territory! (Remember Metternich's comment that "Italy is geographical expression".) We are not saying just that 3,800,000 people involved came from some area that might be defined by geographical co-ordinates, we are saying that they come from Russia. Nor can the idea of a national territory itself be reduced to ideas about simple actions and relations between individuals; nor the idea of being a citizen be reduced to like ideas. The idea of a nation might be unpacked partially in terms of relations between individuals: e.g., one might say that a nation is comprised of all those who are nationals. But it is of no avail to add to the condition for being a national that one be born and/or reside in a given geographical area the further condition that one's birth be registered by certain other individuals. The idea of a nation requires the concomitant ideas of social organization, and concepts such as political leadership, legislative

authority and citizenship -- and these cannot themselves be unpacked without mention of the social whole, i.e., without circularity. A man is not a political leader merely because he leads other men, makes decisions on their behalf or determines to some extent the nature of their lives. He is a political leader only in relation to the political organization. Minimally, it may be maintained that 'being the political leader of . . .' is not an external relationship or simple property, it cannot be understood in isolation from, i.a., 'being a citizen of . . .' Nor can either of these be understood without reference to yet other holistic concepts: every definition and redefinition will contain such concepts. It is not simply a case of complexity, of it being a long exercise that must be completed before holistic concepts are finally unpacked into their individualistic components; the exercise has no end. The same applies for the legislator -- even the primeval legislator. He does not make laws for men to follow just by saying that these are the laws or just by writing them down on paper with impressive seals. If this were all that were involved, anyone could begin to legislate on the street-corner: the orator at Hyde Park Corner would have as much right to be called a legislator as would members of the government. What is essential for someone to be a legislator is that they possess authority and the authority of the legislator comes from, and can only be understood in terms of, the socio-political organization of which he is a part. His laws are obeyed, and obedience to them can only be understood, because he does stand in a certain relationship to that socio-political organization. And a citizen is not just someone who obeys laws, pays taxes and lays down his life when someone tells him to. That he is willing to do such things can only be understood because he

is a citizen: it is, perhaps, part of what is involved in being a citizen. (Compare paying taxes with giving to charity or to a thief.)

From what has been said, it is evident that the additional requirement suggested for someone being a Russian citizen, the requirement of registration, cannot itself be understood solely in individualistic terms. The parties in the ritual of registration, the parents and the registrar, find themselves in positions analogous to those of Mandelbaum's customer and bank-teller and Ortega's citizen and policeman.[2] The registrar is, in one sense, an individual: he is a particular person, an individual human being. (The truth of this proposition is not in doubt; its proper analysis, however, is another matter entirely. It is, perhaps, because the individualist has never bothered to analyse that proposition that he finds the holist arguments so unintelligible.) The actions of the registrar, however, are not really his actions -- or are not, in a sense, totally his actions. In what sense are they not his actions, the individualist would demand, does he not perform them himself, do we perceive any other agency that performs them or performs them with his assistance? We must admit that the registrar, that one particular person, does perform the actions himself and that no other agency is apparent: that particular person asks the questions, notes the responses, signs and seals the documents. Of that there is no question. This does not, however, mean that the individualist's argument is conclusive, since we must still insist that it is only <u>in a sense</u> that the actions are those of that particular individual alone. Our difference with the individualist might best be shown by expanding on the example of the registrar further.

Imagine a typical inter-personal exchange between the parents of a

child and an individual other than the registrar. That individual might well ask the name of the child, he might ask when [exactly] the child was born, what the weight of the child was at birth and, in certain circumstances, he might even ask who the parents were (or what the names of the parents were). Other things being equal, in this case the individual is, as it were, being himself, is speaking for himself. He might actually be interested in this child or in children in general or he might be asking because he knows that it will please the happy parents for someone to take an interest or he might just be being sociable -- using the questions as opening conversational gambits. But the individual need not show any interest at all in the child, not even feigned interest; he might react to the presence of the child in an altogether negative manner. It is not unknown for a person to request the proud and doting parents of a child to keep their off-spring quiet or under control or even to pointedly ignore the presence of a child so as to avoid being drawn into a nauseating discussion on beautiful babies and the joys of parenthood.

The registrar, however, has no choice in his dealings with parents -- although his personal preferences may show through. He does not ask when the baby was born out of interest, not even out of feigned interest; he asks because he has to, that is his job. Moreover, it is only through seeing that it is his job and seeing the significance of that job within the context of some socio-political organization that we can understand what he is really doing and what the difference is between him and our other individual. Yet this is not simply a holism of the situation, an insistence that the situation as a whole must be considered before we can understand what that situation really was. Certainly, such a situ-

ational analysis is necessary -- this much even Popper admits[3] -- but it is not all that is necessary. In order to understand the registrar, qua registrar, we are forced to introduce the notion of some socio-political organization; and the notion of a socio-political organization cannot be unpacked without loss of content in terms solely of the actions and beliefs, dispositions and desires of human individuals -- in isolation from the socio-political organization those actions and beliefs, dispositions and desires would not in themselves even make sense.

So far we dealt only with what is involved in someone being a Russian citizen, the more nebulous idea of being a Russian has been ignored. Yet for a more comprehensive understanding of the sentence perhaps that idea is of importance. It might be thought that an understanding of the sentence is possible once one knows the concepts involved in citizenship and military service, once one understands the basic concepts of modern socio-political organization; but even the most cursory look at socio-political organizations, more specifically of communist socio-political organization, will reveal that more fundamental cultural differences always affect socio-political aspects of life. Russian communism differs greatly from Chinese communism and from Western European communism. Those who denigrate communism on the grounds that Russian communism has always been oppressive and authoritarian or that Chinese communism has always been despotic and feudal forget that even under the previous regimes of those countries the same traits existed: Russian and Chinese communism owe more to the Russian and the Chinese than to the communism. It is no exaggeration to say that an understanding of what it means to be a Russian (or a German) is necessary for an understanding of the sentence under consideration. No historical sentence stands on its own, it

is always intended to fit into a wider context -- the context of an historical narrative or discussion. Superficially, the sentence may seem to stand on its own, but that is because we are always, as hearers or readers, willing to fill in enough of a background to make the sentence intelligible. The problem is whether we fill in the correct background or how adequate the background is that we do fill in. Once again we come face to face with the necessity of a holism of the situation. This time we are required to consider as parts of the situation the socio-cultural traits of the persons involved in the situation. Without considering these some understanding of the sentence may still be possible, but it will always be an incomplete understanding and it may well be a quite erroneous understanding. It would, for example, make a considerable difference had the surrendering soldiers been not Germans but Russians or Japanese -- for the former surrender would have been synonymous with treason and for the latter it would have been a mortal sin. We shall see, moreover, that, although the understanding of such traits need not involve the introduction of any Volksgeist, it cannot be reduced to an understanding of the ideas and beliefs, etc., of individual or particular people.

Since the dispute between individualists and holists is apt to be somewhat difficult and confusing, we may be forgiven for drawing one more example out of sentence (h) in order to demonstrate the real complexity of that superficially simple sentence. An understanding of sentence (h) presupposes some understanding of such concepts as war, invasion and being taken prisoner -- each of these is an holistic concept and involves other holistic concepts. The concept of being at war is not identical with that of one set of people fighting another set of people (a

street brawl is not a war), nor does an invasion consist simply of one set of people entering a territory occupied by another set of people (a visit to relatives does not constitute an invasion). One may, of course, speak figuratively of a tourist invasion; but no number of British tourists landing at Calais, Dieppe or Boulogne will constitute a D-Day. An invasion may, indeed, consist of various people wading ashore from boats, others being flown in, others organizing supplies and telling different people what to do. A battle may be described in terms of different people moving in different directions, aiming and firing weapons, etc. And the individual actions of the participants must, it is true, be "observed" in order for one to know that an army is invading or is fighting a battle: take these actions away and there is nothing left on the basis of which to effect a verification. But, if one merely listed the movements and actions of the individuals, one would lose what is essential, i.e., that this is an invasion or a battle, that there is a war in progress. The individualist cannot escape this, except in a superficial manner. When he gives his description in interpersonal terms, he is taking for granted that there is an invasion or a battle going on. In doing so, he is taking for granted all of the conditions that the holist requires, all the conditions that necessitate a holist intrusion. He seems to get away with it, because his readers also take these things for granted: they surreptitiously fill in the background that he wishes to deny. To demonstrate the inadequacy of the individualist's treatment, we need only consider other contexts in which similar incidents occur as occur in an invasion or a battle -- incidents which might superficially be described in the same way.

Imagine a young man disembarking at Calais, perhaps he even has an

army rucksack on his back. He is stopped by two uniformed officials, both are armed. He does not shoot them down and they do not shoot him down; they simply inspect his passport and luggage and ask him a few questions. What is the difference between this situation and the invasion situation? There is the disembarkation, the uniforms and the arms. If the individualist had described the two cases in terms of individuals and interpersonal relations -- had he, as he would say, described what he saw -- there might be no telling from some isolated sentences that he used which situation he was describing: some sentences used to describe one situation might well have been used to describe the other as well. But actually the whole context has changed. This is a tourist invasion. Here we do not expect shooting; we would be highly surprised if any took place. The necessity of considering the whole context need not embarrass the individualist: he need see this only as the necessity of a holism of the situation and he might, as Popper must, believe that such a holism is compatible with individualism. Each part of the situation he might consider in individualist terms and the whole as the sequential conjunction of individualist sub-situations. In this way, the concepts mentioned, war, invasion and being taken prisoner, might all be colligatory devices -- mere collections of other concepts, packages of concepts -- and all the subordinate concepts might be individualistic ones. Once again, however, there is more required here than a holism of the situation. The concepts that must be appealed to in order to make sense of either context are themselves holistic concepts. To begin with, individuals do not declare wars, nations do. The institutions of passport-control and customs cannot be understood either except in socio-political terms. Neither situation really makes sense unless reference is made to

some holistic concepts: they only look as though they make sense because we are so familiar with the necessary concepts that we do not notice that we are using them. But when a slight change in the situation is made, and we see that these concepts are required in order to understand the change in the situation, it follows that we must have been employing them tacitly even when considering the original situation. We may, therefore, conclude that in sentence (h) no real understanding is possible without appeal to some holistic concepts.

Obviously, a similar treatment is possible in the case of each of the sentencescited above, despite the fact that the individualist seemed to enjoy a measure of success in bending them to suit his contentions. The required treatment of (c) and (d) is quite straightforward. The twenty file of musketeers may all have been individuals, but their being musketeers cannot really be accounted for simply by appeal to volunteering or being drafted, etc. They are members of an armed body that has its position and authority only in relation to some socio-political structure: only through their relationship to that structure can any sense be made of their actions against Lilburne. Similarly, being a member of the Estates cannot be understood except in relation to some socio-political structure. The rather superficial analysis offered by the individualist in terms of election or selection by other individuals will not suffice, because that election or selection itself only makes sense in relation to the structure. But, as we shall see, it is not that the individualist is totally in error -- indeed, his descriptions are quite accurate -- it is just that he has missed an important point in the analysis.

Before we consider sentences (a) and (b), those concerning Charles

of Navarre and Charles of England, we should examine another contention of the holist which casts doubt on the central individualist claim. The holist insists that it does not matter, when considering the sentence about the Russian prisoners, whether one could name every single Russian alive in the year 1941 and specify precisely which of them were members of the armed forces, which of them were captured by the Germans and how. Their names alone would count as nothing next to their being Russians and being soldiers. Nor should this be taken as merely reflecting the fact that, although history attempts to uncover the individual, there are limits to that project. These people were not fighting as individuals: they were fighting as Russian soldiers and the Germans treated them as such. Indeed, neither the fighting nor the capturing would have made sense had they been considered only as individuals. Moreover, no single person is essential to the Russian state or the Russian army, each individually is totally irrelevant and need not have existed; and yet the Russian state would still have existed. What is involved in the holist contention may be brought out by another example from Bullock's book.

> (i) The first country with which Hitler signed a Pact of Non-Aggression had been Poland, and for five years he treated Poland in the friendliest fashion, despite the unpopularity of such a policy in Germany. (p. 491)

Once more, the individualist will begin an analysis of this sentence to suit his purposes. He will observe that the 'in Germany' is a covert reference to a large number of unspecified persons living within a certain geographical area of the European continent. He may allow that not every person within that area found Hitler's actions equally displeasing -- some of them may even have been in favour of his policy, either

because they like the Poles or because they realized what Hitler's ultimate intentions were, and those who did find his actions displeasing may have expressed their displeasure in different ways. That is, the individualist will attempt a quasi-statistical analysis, making use of the idea of open concepts. Such an analysis, of course, will not work: it does not escape the essential mention of holistic concepts. But how does the individualist even deal with Hitler's attitude toward the Polish people? Hitler did not have that attitude towards any particular person in Poland; in all probability, he knew but few Poles. Who the individuals were is, again, quite irrelevant. He had that attitude towards them precisely because they were the Polish people -- a people with certain ideas and aspirations, etc.

Against the holist's argument of the irrelevance of the individual as such for the understanding of such historical sentences the individualist will counter that, without <u>any</u> of the particular people, there would have been no state at all. That is, he will argue that the existence of the "parts" is essential to the existence of the "whole". True though this may be, it does not completely defeat the holist's contention with respect to understanding, as the holist still maintains that no historical sentence can be understood without some reference to holistic concepts and the <u>actual</u> individuals are irrelevant. The counter, typical of Brodbeck and Watkins, that these are unspecified individuals carries no weight at all, since it is in no way essential to the holist's argument that they not be specified -- even if they were specified, they would be irrelevant. As in the opposing arguments that observations of individuals are necessary for the verification of sentences containing holistic terms and that these sentences cannot be

reduced without remainder to sentences containing only individualistic terms, the individualist and the holist seem also to be at a stand-off with respect to the importance of individuals for the understanding of historical sentences -- or, at least, of some historical sentences.

There are some holists who would maintain that even individuals like Hitler are unimportant when it comes to understanding history. Although they would, presumably, not wish to deny the existence of individuals altogether, they do wish to maintain that individuals are only instruments of the situation. (Note: The discussion may change in such holist claims from one about understanding historical sentences to one about the nature of the course of historical events.) However this may be, the lesson learned with respect to unspecified individuals can be extended in part to cover such specified individuals as Hitler. Think of the innumerable examples of historical sentences, including (i), that the individualist could dream up about the individual Adolf Hitler -- breathing a sigh of relief, perhaps, that he was <u>just an individual</u>! But do any of them really support the individualist's thesis unreservedly? Hitler's actions were never simply the actions of an individual man; they were the actions of the Führer of the Third Reich. Nor could his actions ever be understood except as the actions of the Führer of the Third Reich. Hitler could not sign a non-aggression pact with Poland off his own bat; he could do so only as the representative of the German state. Imagine the local grocer flying to Moscow and signing a disarmament treaty with the Russians. That is ridiculous; but only because he is the grocer and not the Prime Minister. Hitler did not sign pacts, order men to war or send them to the gas-chambers <u>as an individual</u> -- such orders would not make sense coming from a mere individ-

ual. Nor, indeed, would his actions make any sense in abstraction from the entire world-view of the German people and their recent history. Outside that context his action would also be unintelligible. And seeing the man in his context, being able to understand his actions as appropriate, will also involve the introduction of holistic concepts.

This guides our analysis of sentences (a) and (b). Charles of Navarre and Charles of England were, in a sense, individuals. They cannot, however, be presented as "pure individuals", as individuals stripped of all their dependence on and involvement with holistic entities. They are able to assert themselves against their ministers, but this action itself is only possible and intelligible with the holistic structure. Thus, even those sentences which refer to the most obviously individualistic entities cannot escape from the holist's demands that no historical sentence can be understood in isolation from holistic concepts.

Nor should it be thought that any action whatsoever is exempt, from the point of view of meaning, from relation to holistic concepts. Even the act of walking or that of kissing must be seen in terms of some socio-cultural background if they are to be meaningful at all. We may suspect that such simple acts, because they hold no particular significance or mystery for us, are free from the requirement suggested. Consider, however, the act of walking to the corner-store as performed by the Western European with the "same" act of walking as performed by the Australian aboriginal. For the latter, walking is part of a way of life: it has great significance where one walks, how one walks and with whom one walks. Again, consider the kiss. When a man kisses his wife, there can be no doubt that that is an action performed by an individual — there is, perhaps, no better paradigm of an interpersonal action. But the act

of kissing cannot be understood in vacuo. There is a sense, perhaps, in which when the man kisses his wife, the whole socio-cultural group shares in the action. Kissing has a special meaning in our own socio-cultural system that it does not have in others; indeed, in some there is no such thing as kissing. (Moreover, the kiss must be seen in its setting even within the socio-cultural system -- Judas, we are told, betrayed Jesus with a kiss; not quite the same as kissing one's wife.) The proponents of individualism may miss the necessity of seeing any action in terms of its socio-cultural background, but this is only possible because they are willing to regard actions "at face value": they try to see action as purely physical, but surreptitiously provide an interpretation based on they own socio-cultural background. But seeing that actions have different significances in different backgrounds should cure the individualist of this habit. That he has not been completely cured, or has not seen the implications of cure, is demonstrated by the continued debate over individualism and holism.

3.4] Transcending Individualism and Holism: We can derive from the analysis given thus far certain conclusions, some of which favour the individualist whilst some favour the holist position. Those favouring the former are:

(1) It is not possible to verify any statement about social wholes except through the verification of statements about human individuals.

(2) Psychological predicates are not meaningfully attributable to social wholes, but only to human individuals: or only human individuals possess psychological states, only human individuals

are capable of thought and action.

(3) Social wholes would not exist without at least some human individuals who would be the constituent members of those wholes.

On the other side of the coin we have:

(1') Methodological holism is essential for any understanding of socio-historical statements or states of affairs.

(2') Talk of social wholes cannot be replaced without remainder by talk of human individuals and their psycho-physical states.

(3') No specific human individual is necessary for the existence of any social whole: who the individuals are is of no importance.

These conclusions fall naturally into pairs of opposites: (1) and (1') appear somewhat at odds with one another, as do (3) and (3'). But neither pair are actually directly contradictory. Nor really are (2) and (2'). The problem is simply that, since history refers to both human individuals and social wholes, the two sets of conclusions becomes practically contradictory or mutually excluding.

From the theoretical point of view, it is the first two pairs of statements that are most important; but there seems to be a tendency either to discuss the issue in terms of the conflict between (3) and (3') or to allow certain supposedly empirical implications of (3) and (3') to tip the scales one way or another.[1] The status of (3') is unclear: it has the appearance of an ontological claim, which would make it the only ontological claim on the holist side of the ledger. Actually, it is included here mainly as a counter-balance for (3), something with which to trade. But, of more importance, (3) and (3') are included instead of two other statements:

(4) The only or ultimate historical unit is the human individual;

(4') A society or other holistic unit is a whole which is more than the mere sum of its parts.

These two statements are generally taken as the epitomes of the rival positions -- and both are obviously ontological. Moreover, when it comes to (4) and (4'), we really are confronted with two diammetrically opposed statements: one could not possibly hold both to be true.

It is with respect to the latter pair of statements that the issue seems to come close to being empirical, but, in point of fact, it is here that it comes closest to the metaphysical. Each of these statements is generally presumed to imply something about causal efficacy in history: either that the individual is the sole causal agency or that the social whole is. If this is so, then a complete victory would appear to be at hand for the individualist. All that seems to be required is a consideration of some concrete historical examples. Let us consider, e.g., Caesar, Napoleon and Hitler. Each rose from obscurity to become a national leader, a dictator, determining the fate of thousands and the course of history. The case rests: simple and empirical. An ontological holist like Plekhanov, however, would not be so easily convinced. He would insist that the individual (even a Caesar, a Napoleon or a Hitler) is unimportant, that the historical situation is totally determined by holistic entities and the situation produces the "hero"; that if it had not been Caesar, it would have been someone like him, since the situation called for someone like that. Of course, Plekhanov's contention is as unverifiable as the individualist's -- as unverifiable as it is unfalsifiable. Thus, the Great Men in History debate degenerates on both sides into ideology -- individualism and freedom of the will <u>versus</u> class or national consciousness.

It would be tempting at this point to conclude that either there are two irreducible kinds of entities in the socio-historical domain, in some way ignoring both (4) and (4'), or that, although individualism is the correct ontological and epistemological position, holism is the correct position from the point of view of methodology. Indeed, both of these alternatives do have their advocates: Mandelbaum opts for the first and Hayek for the second.

Mandelbaum maintains that "societal facts are as ultimate as are psychological facts".[2] That is, although he believes that holistic concepts enter into explanations of all human actions, he does not wish to go as far as to say that "an individual's thoughts or his overt actions are wholly explicable in terms of status and roles".[3] It is clear that he is championing a thesis of mutual irreducibility, but he does believe also that "one set of facts may depend for its existence upon another set of facts and yet not be identical with that latter".[4] (The dependent set, according to Mandelbaum, would be the societal facts. But our comments on individuals, status and roles would indicate that, in some ways, the reverse is also true.) Unfortunately, Mandelbaum is never very explicit as to how this dependency relation works. Had he expanded on his thesis, his basic contention would undoubtedly have collapsed; but some of his comments not only serve to bring the problem of individualism and holism into perspective, they also give an indication of the manner in which it may be resolved.

Hayek's thesis, on the other hand, is manifestly untenable. According to Hayek, the "error" involved in holism is that "it mistakes for facts what are no more than provisional theories, models constructed by the popular mind to explain the connection between some of the individ-

ual phenomena which we observe".[5] The social whole is not given, but is supplied by the historian or sociologist, or by the "popular mind" as manifested in the historian or sociologist, and the historian or sociologist will supply a different unity depending on the question in which he is interested.[6] As we have seen, Hayek's remarks are, from the perspective of methodology and the process of discovery, essentially correct. The historian does and must attempt to reconstruct the facts of history; the actual whole that he produces is his own creation. But unless that is a reflection of the whole that actually existed in the state of affairs being studied, the historian has not succeeded in his task. (Note: Even when the historian fails, he still gives some unifying structure.) Hayek talks of "provisional theories", and that is precisely what the historian is suggesting. He does not know that his reconstruction is the correct one, adverse evidence may always appear that will force him to reconsider his theory, but he is giving a theory of how that state of affairs was. It would be absurd to maintain, in historiography at any rate, that one was giving a theory of how things were if there were no ontological commitment on the part of the researcher to his view of the way things were. The reason that we adopt one reconstruction rather than another is that we believe that the situation was more like the one than the other. Hayek gives the lie to his own position when he says that the theories are constructed "to explain" the connection between some of the phenomena. If the connections were not as the theory asserts, then they would not explain anything. (We may, of course, make a distinction between an explanation and a correct explanation. An incorrect explanation may still be thought to explain by those to whom it is given and it is, in a sense, still an explanation.

But if it were claimed that the explanation never reflected any real connection, then it could scarcely be termed an explanation in any sense.) Imagine an historian keeping to Hayek's principle. He would say that certain individual phenomena were explained by the existence of some social whole and at the same time have to admit that the social whole was a fiction. (Such a position is claimed to be valid by some neo-positivists for the natural sciences. But the position is odd even in the natural sciences.) Hayek has, in effect, committed the elementary blunder of confusing 'theoretical' with 'imaginary' or 'fictional'. There may be some instances in which they are equivalent, but this is not one of them. Such "theory" could not be the basis of historical research. As Hayek himself says in a more lucid moment, we select one rather than another holistic unit, "because we think that we can discern connections [between items within the spatio-temporal limits] -- connections which may or may not exist in fact".[7]

The underlying objection to Hayek's case, however, is that he tries to dissociate methodology from ontology. We cannot describe socio-historical phenomena as though they contained social wholes or carry out research on that assumption, if in fact they do not contain social wholes and we know that they cannot. Had Hayek believed that social wholes were mere heuristic devices, talk of which could be unpacked into talk of human individuals, then he could have consistently made out his claim. But, as we have seen, that case cannot be made anyway. We should refuse, therefore, to accept the possible escape lines offered by both Mandelbaum and Hayek.

Actually, the historicist finds himself in a dilemma with respect to each opposing set of sentences, since he wishes to assert the truth

of both (1)-(3) and (1')-(3'): he believes in both individualism and holism. Thus, although Ortega denies the validity of reference to a Volksgeist as a responsible and efficacious historical agent, he does maintain that "The generation . . . is the most important conception in history"[8] and that "If the essence of each generation is a particular type of sensibility, an organic capacity for certain deeply-rooted directions of thought, this means that each generation has its special vocation, its historical mission".[9] And Croce, while insisting on the necessity of understanding the universal in history (and historiography) berates that species of historiography that takes as its domain of enquiry historical epochs: "In it," he says, "the individual persons and actions and works are posed as if the persons were employees of the epoch, and the actions were tasks assigned to and discharged by them."[10] The resolution of the holist dilemma is achieved by both denying and asserting the traditional claims of individualists and holists. These claims are denied on the grounds that all of them presuppose the validity of illegitimate abstractions; they are asserted by overcoming the abstractions and positing a new synthesis (or resynthesis) between individual and universal, the synthesis of the concrete individual or the concrete universal. "The logic of history," maintains Collingwood, "is the logic of the concrete universal."[11] This applies equally to the required treatment of historical agents and to the treatment of historical situations. The new individualism and new holism denounces the traditional position of the individualist as a pseudo-individualism, as a species of particularism akin to the pseudo-universalism practised in the natural sciences.

Let us return to the two entities theory and see how the doctrine of the concrete universal will enable us to resolve the traditional

individualism-holism dilemma. What is wrong with the thesis that there are two distinct, though perhaps dependent, kinds of entities in the socio-historical world which cannot be reduced the one to the other? We have seen that it is this: If there were two kinds of entities and these interacted, then it should be possible to isolate them and to determine the rules governing their interaction. But this isolation and determination of rules of interaction is not possible with respect to individuals and social wholes. One cannot understand the roles and statuses of individuals without reference to social wholes; but neither can one understand social wholes except in relation to individuals and to the beliefs and actions of those individuals. Separation itself is impossible. In the registration example it was noted that once one took away the beliefs and actions that could be attributed to individuals, there was nothing left. It is, however, no more admissible to claim an independent status for "pure" individuals. The difficulty in the contemporary discussion is that the ontological status of pure individuals has been taken to be completely transparent -- everyone knows what an individual is. The only real problem allowed is: what is a social whole? But if our comments about the inter-relationship between ontology and methodology are correct, there is as much ground for suspicion of the status of "pure" individuals as there is of "independent" social wholes. Mandelbaum is correct when he denies that the parts of social wholes are individuals: the relationship here is not really that of the part to the whole -- sentences (4) and (4') are expressed in a fundamentally erroneous manner.[12] Mandelbaum misstates the case, however, when he claims that "the 'parts' of a society are specific societal facts, not individuals": it is the entire 'parts'-'whole' vocabulary that is

erroneous.

We have seen that the debate between individualist and holist is often carried out at a pseudo-empirical level: legion are those who believe that this is actually an empirical question. Some point to the fact, and it is a fact, that individuals are often helpless in the face of great social pressure, that ideas and interests of the individual do often clash with those of the class or the nation and that when this happens the individual is frustrated; others counter with examples of how the great men of history have turned the tide against enormous social odds. There is nothing wrong with either kind of claim. What is wrong is the use of such claims to "prove" individualism or holism. They could not do such a thing: they are completely irrelevant -- not least because they presuppose the existence of both individuals and social wholes.

But these claims are quite legitimate: there is an action and reaction between individual and social whole. The problem is that traditionally those who have discussed this issue have talked of pure individuals and independent social wholes. The simple fact is that <u>there are no such things, neither pure individuals nor independent social wholes</u>. Such talk is the result of faulty abstraction and of the reification of pseudo-entities based on this faulty abstraction. It is not really a question of establishing some external relation between two kinds of entities, nor of establishing a reductionist relation between a genuine and a derived entity, it is a conceptual relation. Both sides in the individualist-holist controversy have sought to find only one kind of entity, often presupposing that there are two and arguing their case on the relative efficacy of one kind over the other; neither side

sought to find both kinds in one, an indivisible combination of the two pseudo-entities. It is only when we recognize that this is the case that any sense can be made of the antipathy between (1) and (1') and (2) and (2'); it is only when we recognize that this is the case that a truly satisfactory theory of the socio-historical process can be given. This theory of the socio-historical process, however, will not require us to revise any of the things that we normally say about either individuals or social wholes in our everyday talk of them: the theory will provide a more consistent theoretical framework for what we would say. The theory is intended, as Ryle would have it, "to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess".

The first individualist contention was that it is never possible, in principle, to verify any statement about social wholes except via the verification of statements about human individuals from which the statements about social wholes can be deduced. This contention reflects Marrou's position that only human individuals really exist in the socio-historical world and Brodbeck's position that holism is counter to empiricism, that "what we observe are [always] people and their characteristics not supra-individuals and their characteristics". On closer examination, however, Marrou's ontological claim turns out to be extremely ambiguous and Brodbeck's empiricism turns out to be pseudo-empiricism. What, indeed, is there in the socio-historical world? What is it, indeed, that we do observe? Do we ever observe pure individuals? In the registrar example, we observe not a pure individual but an individual who is a registrar; in the case of the Russian prisoners, we do not observe masses of pure individuals, we observe individuals who are Russians and are prisoners. The very concept of a pure individual is a

meaningless abstraction. What would such a creature be like? Presumably, he would not in and of himself be a registrar, or a soldier, or a Russian, or a German. To say that he was any of these would be to attribute to him holistically associated properties and dispositions. Yet stripped of all status conferred on him by his place in society, in his class and in his occupation, he would be nothing. Stripped of the way of life in terms of which even his most mundane actions have their meaning, he becomes a _je ne sais quoi_, the bare substratum of humanity. Perhaps the closest that we could get to such a pure individual would be a total amnesiac, and an amnesiac unable even to converse with his fellows at the most rudimentary level. This is definitely not the basic unit of study in the historical sciences, nor is this the basic causal agent in the historical process.

Man _is_ a social animal: once we abstract his existence from his sociality, we are no longer speaking of man at all, we are speaking of a non-existent entity. The radical reality of the socio-historical world is neither social whole nor abstract pseudo-individual, _it is people_. This simple truth has been overlooked by both individualist and holist alike -- or, at least, its meaning has been totally misinterpreted. When Marrou says that all that exists are human individuals, either he means that there exist individual Frenchmen and Englishmen, individual capitalists and communists, individual catholics and protestants, individual bakers and candlestick-makers, or he means nothing. When Brodbeck says that what we observe are people and their characteristics, either she means that what we observe are social animals or she means nothing.

The people whom we pass in the street, with whom we have social

intercourse at home and at work, are not pure individuals, they are doctors, lawyers, students, shop-keepers, mothers, wives, sons and daughters; they are Canadians, Frenchmen, Englishmen; they are liberals, conservatives, socialists, etc. We know these things about them not by some mystical intuition but only through observation: we know that someone is, say, a shop-keeper by observing his actions and the context in which he acts. The individualist is mistaken in believing that we observe the actions of pure individuals and then construct the notion of being a shop-keeper from those actions. From bare physical movements, it is difficult to call them actions, we can deduce nothing about social facts. What we perceive is a shop-keeper. That is not to say that this person being a shop-keeper is <u>given</u> to us in perception, rather as some positivists believe that sense-data are given in perception; to maintain that would be to ignore the dual nature of perception, to ignore that it consists of two elements: sensation and thought. Seeing the person as a shop-keeper involves interpreting his actions in a specific way and fitting them into a previously established conceptual framework. This conceptual framework is itself an interpretation of the world, an interpretation that we learn from being brought up in a certain socio-historical environment. It may sound odd to insist that an interpretation is involved here, because in this case we are dealing with our own familiar world, a world which strikes us as a world of fact not interpretation. Familiarity, however, does not obviate the necessity for a conceptualizing element in perception. An essential aspect of the conceptual framework that we learn is the social dimension; and we learn this not as a construct out of more simple concepts, but as a total dimension of our world: it is one of the major categories in terms of which

we learn to view the world. It follows that to say of some person that he is a doctor, a lawyer, a student, a shop-keeper, a Canadian, a Frenchman, an Englishman, etc., is not to commit oneself to the belief that that person is something over and above an individual or, indeed, to commit oneself to the belief that there is anything in the socio-historical world over and above individuals, their actions and their creations. There is no social dimension left if one takes away all the particular people, just as there are no individuals left if one takes away all of their social dimensions. The socio-historical world begins and ends with individuals.

The question arises: why has the traditional individualist not accepted an analysis of the ultimate constituents of the socio-historical world in terms of concrete individuals? It is not simply that he failed to uncover such an analysis, since the doctrine of the concrete universal and the concrete individual can be found in Hegel -- and, in more rudimentary form, even in Rousseau. The problem is that, for the individualist, there is a spectre which haunts all discussions of history and man's part in history, the spectre of determinism. This spectre has manifested itself already in our discussion of predictionism. With the present discussion, as with that of predictionism, the spectre appeared not as part of any organized argument but as the fundamental, but unspoken, raison d'être of all arguments. The individualist regards all versions of holism, and the doctrine of the concrete universal and the concrete individual does involve holism, with suspicion, because most earlier versions of holism seemed to negate the freedom of the individual. "Each of us," wrote Rousseau, "puts his person and all his powers in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and,

in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole."[13] This social whole was more than the sum of its parts; its will was more than the aggregate of the wills of the individuals who made it up. It became a supra-individual with a will of its own; and, moreover, it became the supreme arbiter of right and wrong. Indeed, Rousseau held that "whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body". This assertion that the will of the state does and should have authority over the wills of the individuals making it up would be sufficient to alienate individualists against a supposed totalitarianism on the part of Rousseau. But Rousseau goes further: "This means nothing less," he adds, "than that [the individual] will be forced to be free."[14] No mere contest of wills, no mere argument over supremacy of will, is involved here: Rousseau is replacing the individual with the state as the ultimate causal and moral agent in history. It matters little to individualists that Rousseau claimed to be advocating a form of association "in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before".[15] All that matters to individualists is that there is now a new actor on the stage of history. Hegel did little to lessen the suspicion of individualists against holism. Without the state, maintains Hegel, the individual is nothing: "The function of the individual," he says, "is to appropriate to himself this substantial being [the state which is Spirit] making it part of his character and capacity, and thus become something in the world."[16] The Spirit is or has a law unto itself: "[I]t determines itself, posits its own determinations and in turn abolishes them (transcending itself), and by this very process of abolition and transcending gains an affirmative, ever richer and more concretely determined

form."[17] Comments such as these have generally been interpreted by individualists in a manner totally alien from that intended by their authors. Hegel, for example, may have believed in a strong, centralized government, he may have succumbed to an abstract conception of Reason and committed the fallacy of misplaced concreteness with respect to that concept, he may have been seduced by the Christian ideal of perfect freedom through total subservience, but his philosophy is, nevertheless, a philosophy of freedom. For Hegel, there exists no contradiction between a person being free and at the same time being "a representative" of a way of life, or of the "embodiment" of Reason.[18] Moreover, Hegel clearly does not wish to separate the particular in man from the universal aspect of man, nor does he wish to deny the existence of the former. For example, in The Philosophy of Right, he contends that:

> The concrete person, who is himself the object of his particular aims, is, as a totality of wants and a mixture of caprice and physical necessity, one principle of civil society. But the particular person is essentially so related to other particular persons that each establishes himself and finds satisfaction by means of the others, and at the same time purely and simply by means of the form of universality, the second principle here.[19]

Individualists, unable to comprehend the compatibility of these ideas of man and society, take Hegel at less than face-value and brand him and the doctrine of the concrete universal as totalitarian and as implying a determinism in human affairs.

Feeling that the basic presupposition of the liberal system is

endangered, individualists shun any consideration of holistically oriented theories. They believe that they can point to a particular person and insist that that person is an individual -- as, indeed, they can -- but they go further than this and try to claim that individuality can be understood without reference to social wholes. The time has come to dispel the illusion that predictionism and holism are incompatible with the doctrine of the freedom of the will. This exercise is not necessitated because the doctrine of the freedom of the will is known to be true and because, therefore, in order to be true itself, the doctrine of the concrete universal must at least be compatible with it. The doctrine of the freedom of the will is not self-evidently true; it is, rather, a major metaphysical presupposition of all thinking about socio-historical matters. Yet so fundamental is that presupposition to our conception of the human world, that to deny it would require a total conceptual shift -- a shift of such magnitude as to be unimaginable.

It is, perhaps, understandable that the individualist fails to comprehend Hegel and subsequent historicists, as the relationship between man and society is far from obvious and has been discussed, e.g., by Hegel and Dilthey in a manner that may suggest a helplessness on the part of the individual, even of the great man and the man of genius, in relation to the Spirit of the People or the Objective Mind, and by Ortega in a manner that suggests an elitist view of society in which the common man is "a prisoner and a slave" of usage,[20] a view which can find little sympathy among liberal democrats. But what suggests to the individualist that holism implies determinism is that the human individual is seen as a member of a society, or of a class,

or as an embodiment of the Spirit of a People or of an Age, etc., and that seeing him in this way makes it possible to treat him as a mere instantiation of some general law(s). This, according to the individualist, at once robs him of his individuality and renders him determined. Thus, the spectre of determinism manifests itself in the same way with respect to holism as it did with respect to the doctrine of predictionism: and, therefore, one argument can be employed to answer both objections.

The tendency to envisage holism as implying determinism is nowhere more apparent than it is in the individualist's treatment of the Marxian theory of dialectical materialism. (This theory probably represents to the individualist the most dangerous and powerful attack on the idea of the freedom of the individual in the historical process because it has such a wide-spread acceptance in certain areas of the world.) In the theory of dialectical materialism: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggle." Individuals may perform actions, but essentially they do what they do only as members of some class. Moreover, there is an historical necessity governing the successive stages of history. Indeed, this historical necessity might be thought to offer yet another proof of the incompatibility of holism with the freedom of the will; but in the final analysis the two determinisms -- or, rather, the two pseudo-determinisms -- can be reduced to one. The bourgeois-capitalist system of society cannot help but collapse in favour of the anarcho-communist system of society, since the former contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Against this socio-historical determinism, the individualist claims that, if the succession of

stages is predetermined, in the sense that it is predetermined that the dawn will come, then the idea of individuals working for the overthrow of capitalism makes as much sense as the idea of people going out onto the mountain tops and praying or dancing to entreat the dawn to come. This simplistic objection, which some believe to be the only argument necessary to defeat the Marxist theory, is symptomatic of the misunderstanding of holism so prevalent among individualist thinkers.

There are two ways of remedying this misunderstanding. The first is by demonstrating, at what might appear to be an empirical level, that the Marxian analysis does not deny the freedom of the will, but that, rather, it rests on that presupposition or may rest on that presupposition. The second is by demonstrating where the failure of the individualist's analysis actually occurs.

In the capitalist society, at least as it is envisaged by Marx, the means of production are concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of people, the bougeois class. These individuals place a value on only one thing: material profit or gain. Their entire way of life, their entire world-view, is dominated by and oriented around that one value. In a state of perfect competition between capitalists, where no single member of that class can gain advantage from having a monopoly or from a new invention or by being closest to some vital raw material, the only way in which additional profits can be procured is through the greater and greater exploitation of the working class. Capitalism as a system cannot exist without this working class: the working class is not only the product of the system, it is also a necessary condition of the very existence of the system. The exploit-

ation of the workers is achieved by paying them less than the profit accruing from their labour. The capitalist, since he puts value only on making a profit, will employ more and more workers, but only up to the point where the marginal profit accruing to the last man hired is zero. By very definition, the capitalist must exploit the workers: that is the essence of being a capitalist. It is in this way that the capitalist system contains the germ of its own destruction: to exist it must bring into existence an exploited working class, the class that will eventually destroy it. Imagine being a member of that working class. One lives in a society in which the only value is profit, but one works from morning to night at subsistence wages (kept at subsistence level by the Iron Law of Wages). When the system is in its infancy, exploitation may not have reached a level at which it really hurts -- there may be a possibility for individuals who wish to escape to do so, perhaps by moving to an "underdeveloped" area or by becoming a member of some protected professional class. To begin with, also, there may be a reverence for the social hierarchy (left over from a previous system?) which will keep the working class in its place. But once the system has really established itself, it spreads through the whole society, through the whole world, destroys the once independent middle-classes and draws everyone into the dark satanic mills.[21] Eventually, however, the people of the oppressed class will realize that they are being exploited and they will find their position intolerable: they will be pushed to such dire straits as to rebel against the system which preaches profit yet keeps them at subsistence level.

If this is historical determinism, then far from being incompatible

with the doctrine of the freedom of the will, it actually seems to be in perfect accord with, e.g., Dray's theory of rational explanation.[22] The working class do not find themselves driven along by a mighty wave which they cannot control, they act on the grounds of perfectly good reasons. For, surely, we would want to claim that anyone in the position in which members of the working class find themselves would rebel, the reasons for their rebellion are quite understandable. That is, one might even wish to say, the reasonable thing to do. Not only would we understand the rebellion of the working class, we would also consider that it came about precisely because of the free spirit of the oppressed. "Here I stand," says Luther, "I can do no other." Yet no one is being "driven" by a force beyond their control; it is quite simply a case that the reasons for actions are compelling. Similarly, the capitalist does not say 'I am a capitalist, therefore I must exploit', nor is he "driven" to exploit; quite simply, he sees himself in a situation in which the only course of action open to achieve his values is to exploit. Therefore, he exploits the working class for reasons, not through compulsion. The history of the movement from the capitalist system to anarcho-communism, in Marx's story, is the history of the class struggle; but it is, nonetheless, the story of individual human beings who find themselves in a certain situation and act accordingly, act from perfectly understandable reasons: "showing men to be at the same time the authors and the actors of their own history . . ."[23] As if laying to rest Croce's objection in advance, Marx maintains that:

> History does nothing; it 'does not possess immense riches', it 'does not fight battles'. It is men,

> real, living men, who do all this, who possess things and fight battles. It is not 'history' which uses men as a means of achieving -- as if it were an individual person -- its own ends. History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends.[24]

What more could even Watkins ask? To say, therefore, that historical determinism is at odds with the doctrine of the freedom of the will is just not true.

How is it, then, that there is such a prevalent belief that, if it is possible to subsume the actions of an individual under a general law, as one can according to the Marxian theory, then the actions of the individual become determined in some sense detrimental to the notion of individual freedom? Two major factors are responsible for the emergence of this belief. First, there is the failure of Plato and of subsequent philosophers to identify precisely the relation between particular and universal; second, there is the wide-spread acceptance of the Aristotelian notion that knowledge of the universal is "more philosophical and serious", more scientific, than knowledge of the particular.[25] (Plato, of course, had held that only opinion was possible with respect to particulars, not knowledge.) Plato's problem is dramatically expressed in the antithesis between the Third Man Argument of the Parmenides and the Third Bed Argument of the Republic. In the former dialogue, it is argued that, if there exists a Form which all particulars of a certain sort must resemble to be of that sort, then there must be another Form which both the original Form and the set of particulars resemble in order that they be alike, and so on, ad infinitum. But in the Republic Plato employs much the

same kind of argument to establish that there can only be one Form covering each set of particulars: if there were more than one, there would have to be an infinite number, which is impossible. His oscillation between these two uses of the argument seems to indicate that Plato never resolved the problem of the relation between universal and particular: he is never explicit whether it is a relation of imitation or participation, whether universals are transcendent or immanent.[26] Nevertheless, Plato did stress the reality of the Forms and this, together with his doctrine of the difference between knowledge and opinion, inclines him towards transcendentalism. The influence of Aristotle increases this tendency and produces, if not an ontological transcendentalism and essentialism, at least a methodological transcendentalism and essentialism in science.

The natural scientist, as generalizer par excellence, has either consciously or unconsciously fostered this distinction between knowledge of the particular and knowledge of the universal. He refers to his generalizations as universal laws and believes himself to be dealing with the universal. These universal laws range over and "control" what happens in any particular case. When there is a law $(x)(Ax \rightarrow Bx)$ and an event of type A exists, then it is determined by the law that an event of type B will follow. Actually, however, only the separation of the universal from the particular gives the impression of determinism, of the universal somehow determining the particular. It is, in fact, quite meaningless to maintain that the law determines the succession of events -- or, for that matter, that it determines anything at all. What kind of determinism could that possibly be? It is possible, say, that a psychoanalyst or a psycho-

logist might discover that early sexual experiences determine behaviour in later stages of a human's life; but to say that the law expressing this causal connection determines the later behaviour is no more than a category mistake. The law itself can at best indicate or describe the causal relationship between the earlier events and the later events: Only events cause other events. (Moreover, it should be remembered that not all laws are causal laws.)

> Abstract thought [notes Collingwood] is always deterministic, because the universal is not contained in the particular but thrown outside it: what determines the particular is not itself but something else, namely, the universal . . . Separate the universal from the particular and you hypostatize it into a second particular whose special nature is to be the determinant or tyrant of the first.[27]

This determinism is, however, only apparent: it arises from a failure to realize that the universal and the particular are no more than analytic abstractions: that, although it is possible to abstract them in thought, they are meaningless when hypostatized.

This ontological and epistemological view of the individual as the union, figuratively speaking, of the universal and the particular, which Croce and Collingwood apply to "facts" and "events" in science and in history, has a further application, viz., with respect to the supposed dilemma between individualism and holism. Most criticisms of holism are either overtly or covertly premised on the belief that its introduction renders human behaviour deterministic and, therefore, unfree and that it implies that there are other real actors on the historical stage than individual human beings. It can be seen now,

however, that this is just not the case. The doctrine of the concrete universal does assert that individuals are the radical reality of the socio-historical world. What it denies is that there are particular people in the traditional sense insisted on by traditional pseudo-individualism, i.e., bare particular persons isolated from their socio-historical background: it is meaningless "to postulate an abstract -- isolated -- human individual".[28] But the doctrine of the concrete universal is no less insistent on denying that there are independent holistic entities in the sense of the supposed traditional pseudo-holism, i.e., supra-individuals apart from the people who make them up. As Marx observes:

> It is above all necessary to avoid postulating 'society' once more as an abstraction confronting the individual. The individual is a social being . . . Though man is a unique individual -- and it is just his particularity which makes him an individual, a really individual social being -- he is equally the whole, the ideal whole, the subjective existence of society as thought and experienced. He exists, in reality, as the representation and the real mind of social existence, and as the sum of human manifestations of life.[29]

Both traditional individualism and traditional holism are the result of the said mistaken abstraction, and the problem of whether the one or the other is true is, therefore, a pseudo-problem. Once this is realized, it becomes obvious that "an extreme holism" such as that of Marx can be interpreted in no more a deterministic way than an extreme individualism such as that, say, of Sartre's theory expressed in La Mort dans l'âme: the working class are as radically responsible for

the overthrow of capitalism as Mathieu and his colleagues are for losing the war.[30] Moreover, the doctrine of the concrete universal provides a theoretical basis for understanding this. The entire solution is found in refusing to make an abstraction of "part" from "whole", in realizing that "the essence of man is not an abstraction inherent in each particular individual . . . [that] the real nature of man is the totality of social relations", and that it is such because man is molded by and expresses himself through these social relations.[31]

There may still be those who would insist, as Popper and Watkins would, that the particular person can function as the basic unit in socio-historical enquiry because this supposed individual is a rational being. As a rational being, even though the individual may be a product of his society, he still remains an individual with the ability to make his own decisions, to accept or reject anything on its own merits. It is to this rational individualism that we must now turn.

CHAPTER FOUR: RATIONALISM AND PRESUPPOSITIONS IN HISTORY

4.1 Popperian Rationalism and Historicist Irrationalism: If there is one tenet which can be said to stand at the basis of liberalism, it is the belief in man's fundamental rationality. It is this aspect of man's nature, it is supposed, that underlies even his individuality. The historicist's attack on the principles of rationalism, therefore, has occasioned massive counter-attacks from the ranks of liberal thinkers. Popper, although allowing that Marx himself was a rationalist, lays the blame for the subversion of the belief in rationality on Marx and Hegel. "Like Hegel's doctrine that our ideas are determined by national interests and traditions," protests Popper, "Marx's doctrine [that our opinions are determined by class interests] tended to undermine the rationalist belief in reason."[1] The next blow, according to Popper, came when "historicist prophecy and oracular irrationalism made a frontal attack on [reason]".[2] Popper's objections to historicism, based on the notion that in historicism beliefs are determined, that they can be predicted in advance, are

open to the counter-arguments to anti-predictionism already suggested. This leaves the fundamental charge of irrationalism.

To accuse historicists of irrationalism is, in one sense of 'irrationalism', the most unkind cut of all; in another sense, it is not only true that they are irrationalists -- or at least that they are non-rationalists, anti-rationalists or a-rationalists -- it is one of their most cherished discoveries. Neo-historicists, like Hegel, place great stress on the role of thought in history: all history, they maintain, is the history of thought. This position is reflected in analytic philosophy of history, where it is often argued that, since men are thinking and acting beings, we must be concerned not with interaction on a crass physical level but with the "insides" of historical events, the thoughts "behind" the events. (It is scarcely surprising that Collingwood is most responsible for the current popularity of this position among Anglo-American philosophers.) The historicist goes even further: he claims that history is the history of philosophy. Hegel had held that philosophy of history and history of philosophy are identical. We can now see what this means. Speculative philosophy of history is equivalent to history -- there can be no distinction between plot and play, only with the emphasis accorded to them. Now, if philosophy represents the most crystalline form of thought in any society, then it follows that the foundation of all history, thought, is expressed in the philosophy of societies. Therefore, history is philosophy: philosophy of history becomes, by the same token, the history of philosophy. (We shall see that this equation, championed by Croce, Collingwood and Ortega, must undergo some emendation before it can be accepted.) In the contemporary

debate over explanation in history, however, the claim that all events must be explained in terms of the thought that underlies them is generally expressed as the insistence of the applicability of rational explanation. The irrationalist element of historicism has, therefore, been thought of as a denial of the applicability of rational explanation or of explanation by reasons. Such a confusion is the result of quite fundamental confusions of the meaning of irrationalism and of the implications of the historicist denial of rationalism.

When Popper comes to define 'rationalism' and its opposite, he first makes a distinction between the rationalism which is opposed to irrationalism and that which is opposed to empiricism. The latter kind is presumably that practised, e.g., by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, which "extols intelligence (intellect is, perhaps, better) above observation and experiment".[3] This Popper dubs 'intellectualism' -- the same term reserved for it by Croce, Collingwood and Ortega. Popper has little against this kind of anti-empiricism, as long, presumably, as it is tempered by empiricism: he even includes it under his own use of 'rationalism' when he employs that term to refer to the proper method of science. The irrationalism against which Popper argues is that based on the emotions and passions rather than on reason: it is not a method but an attitude -- the opposite attitude to what Popper somewhat esoterically dubs 'rationalism', the attitude which seeks to "solve as many problems as possible by an appeal to reason, i.e., to clear thought and experience".[4]

> We could then [he maintains] say that rationalism is an attitude of readiness to listen to critical

> arguments and to learn from experience. It is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that 'I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth'.[5]

Popper and Hayek have what may be described as a simple terminological difference on this point. Hayek wishes to maintain that it is the rationalists who are responsible for those terrible totalitarian systems with their great blue-prints for society, their large-scale socio-economic plans. In this Hayek is closer to the historicists, since the latter, too, are opposed to a rationalism which proceeds by pure deduction from supposedly certain premises. And like Popper and Hayek, they are especially opposed to it when it is applied to the social sphere, where it assumes "a positively criminal aspect".

> The ideal of the future [says Ortega], constructed by pure intellect, must supplant both past and present. This is the temper which produces revolutions. Rationalism applied to politics results in revolutionary doctrine and, vice versa, an epoch is not revolutionary unless it is rationalist.[6]

Actually, all that has happened is that Hayek and the historicists have called rationalists those whom Popper has called essentialists. In view of the place that Popper gives to reason in his epistemology, it is, perhaps, understandable that he does not wish to detract from rationalism.

Popper's confusion of rationalism with "an attitude of reasonableness", however, has far-ranging effects. If the historicists are against rationalism, then, according to Popper, they must be against reasonableness. To Popper's twisted logic, this is demonstrated by

the unwillingness of the utopian planners to listen to criticism. Yet although it may be commendable that people will gather around a table or a microscope and discuss their differences, we must realize that this is no guarantee that truth will out in the end. Rationalism, as Popper has defined it, is neither a necessary condition nor a sufficient condition for truth. People may sit around a table and eventually come to some consensus, to a solution that suits everyone. Just as they did in pre-Galilean days when they all agreed that the Earth was flat! It just is not enough that everyone agrees to some proposition: that does not make it true. Nor is it necessary. One man, e.g., Galileo, may be right and everyone else wrong. "Clever men," admits Popper, "may be very unreasonable; they may cling to their prejudices [!] and may not expect to hear anything worth while from others."[7] Yes, they may cling to their prejudices, they may also cling to their truth! Against Popper's rash assertion, it is possible to argue that it is less to the reasonable man than to the unreasonable man to whom we owe novel ideas in the sciences. The former looks at the prevailing views and says 'I may be wrong and they may be right': in the end he may end up adapting himself to the situation. The latter says 'I am right, they are all wrong': it is he and only he who forces changes. Of course, he may attempt to prove that he is right, but that does not make him any less unreasonable. Popper is again confusing an attitude that may be adopted in science with a scientific methodology.[8] In point of fact, neither reasonableness nor unreasonable have any privileged status with respect to arriving at scientific truth.

The historicist does not intend by his writing to promote the

the cause of unreasonableness: nothing is further from his mind. Nor does he intend to promote totalitarianism. The historicist attack on rationalism is an attack on what Popper calls 'intellectualism', the belief in the primacy of pure intellect. But as the similarity between the epistemologies of Collingwood and Popper may have suggested, this does not mean that historicists deny any place in their system to reason. Indeed, reason plays an important role in historicism. What the historicists deny is that pure reason, reason in and of itself, is of any importance either in life or in philosophy. From the point of view of the historical process, the historicists wish to replace the barren 'Cogito ergo sum' of Descartes with the more dynamic 'Storicizzo dunque sono' -- perhaps, I suffer therefore I am -- of Vico. If we consider rationalism as the doctrine that the highest level to which man can aspire is that of thought, that by pure reason alone man can attain truth, then rationalism is in error. Thought is not the sine qua non of humanity: thought, in and of itself, is nothing. For the historicist, thought exists only so far as it is of practical use: man does not live in order to think, he thinks in order to live.[9] From the point of view of epistemology, this can be expressed as the belief that "reason has no concrete form of existence other than as interpretation of experience".[10] Popper would most certainly concur with this thesis: indeed, it is difficult to dissociate Popper from the historicists in general outlook, either in his attitude towards epistemology or in his attitude towards the relation between philosophy and life. If Popper were only more consistent, his own position would have to resemble more closely that of the historicists. The difficulty is that Popper remains the victim of certain fundamental rationalist

prejudices; and, insofar as he cannot free himself from these, he is at loggerheads with the historicists on certain crucial issues. Where this breakdown between Popper and the historicists occurs can be seen from an analysis of some of the things that he says about reason and science.

"Reason, like language," Popper maintains, "can be said to be a product of social life." Thus far he is in accord with even his own characterization of Hegel and Marx. But he goes on to claim that:

> A Robinson Crusoe (marooned in early childhood) might be clever enough to master many difficult situations; but he would invent neither language nor the art of argumentation. Admittedly, we often argue with ourselves; but we are accustomed to do so only because we have learned to argue with others, and because we have learned in this way that the argument counts, rather than the person arguing.[11]

Earlier Popper had argued that although Crusoe might succeed "in building on his island physical and chemical laboratories, astronomical observatories, etc., and in writing a great number of papers, based throughout on observation and experiment", he still could have no real science, since there is "nobody but himself to check his results . . ."[12] Such arm-chair sociology, however, is but a poor substitute for genuine epistemology. But what is more important, his position here does serious damage to what he dubs "the rational unity of mankind". Learning to argue with others convinces us that "everyone with whom we communicate [is] a potential source of argument and of reasonable information."[13] The importance of this is discovery is clear.

If what people think is merely the product of some holistic process, then it does not matter who is doing the arguing -- they are ever and always reflecting the "thought" of the supra-individual. Popper wishes, however, to stress the individualist aspect of thought by claiming that each person in and of himself can make changes in the "traditional views", can come to his own conclusions, etc. It is apparent that Popper, through his failure to recognize the true relationship between individual and society reflected in the doctrine of the concrete individual, cannot reconcile the Hegel-Marx approach to reason and truth with his individualist inclinations. Yet his own comments are not only curiously paradoxical they are also detrimental to the individualist position. If one man alone does not possess the ability to argue with himself (or to imagine the possibility of argumentation), then argument and all that is essential to what Popper considers rationality is an emergent property of social wholes. If this were the case, then there would be something to the claim that the whole is more than the sum of its parts -- and something substantially more. Thus, Popper seems condemned to accepting traditional holist conclusions and to denigrating the position of the individual. Popper does, to be sure, maintain that "we owe our reason to 'society'" always means that "we owe it to certain concrete individuals".[14] But on Popper's own view of the nature of individuals, i.e., individuals imagined in isolation from social wholes, this claim cannot be made consistently. <u>If none of those individuals had or could have any idea of language, science or rationality, from whence would these ideas come</u>? Popper is faced with an insoluble problem: either he denies that individuals have language or he adopts an emergentist theory of language and rationality. And he is faced with

this problem only because he cannot see that the Hegel-Marx theory of socially determined "truth" is reconcilable to individualism, that it does not imply the total relativity of truth, and that it is necessary for and implied by his own epistemological position.

Not only is the Crusoe argument detrimental to Popper's entire endeavour it is also totally superfluous. His only motive for advancing it is that he wishes to make rationality, science and objectivity a matter of social co-operation. That is, he wishes to bolster his argument against rationalism-essentialism, to make that position logically impossible: it cannot be true, because rationality, science and objectivity require intersubjective communication and, therefore, reasonableness. We have seen that Popper's argument on that score confuses an epistemological point with a possible attitude towards theories held by individuals. What is more, since the attitude is an actual attitude, it cannot be shown to be logically impossible. Had Popper recognized that his former argument was the result of a confusion, he would not, perhaps, have found it necessary to introduce rationality, science and objectivity as emergent properties: he could easily have given an analysis of these that required neither emergentism nor the slighting of the individual. Moreover, it would have been an argument that placed the individual in a paramount position with respect to any supposed supra-individuals.

In order to have an understanding either of the world or of the meaning of other people's utterances, one must possess an ability to interpret phenomena — even to interpret the phenomena of communication as communication. If one does not possess such an ability, no one can teach it to one: even to understand what it was that they were trying

to teach would presuppose that ability. This is an ability which must be native to the individual. But once one does possess such an ability, one may carry on scientific pursuits, be objective (i.e., be open-minded and test one's hypotheses) without anyone else around. To have a meaningful world at all, one must at least possess an intrasubjective community of interpretation, one must be consistent in one's view of the world and in one's attitude towards it. And if one does possess such an intrasubjective community of interpretation, there is nothing in principle to stop one having a language. Anyway, such an intrasubjective community is necessary even before one can participate in an intersubjective community of interpretation. One must make interpretations of what is said by others before one can begin to communicate with them — even to the extent of understanding that they are communicating. Thus, even an insistence on intersubjective communities of interpretation presupposes that the individual is capable of intrasubjective communication and understanding. Such an analysis not only removes some of the anomalies from the Popperian theory, it also reasserts the importance of the individual.

To understand the difference between Popper's position and that of the historicists, other presuppositions of Popper's analysis must be examined. First, he presupposes that a community of interpretation is possible even between those possessing disparate world-views: that no matter how different the world-views of two persons may be, it is always in principle possible for them to reach an understanding of each other's position. Second, he presupposes that once the basic beliefs or absolute presuppositions of each world-view are known, these can be tested empirically to determine their truth or falsity. Without this

supposition it would not be possible to engage in the idealized debate of 'I may be wrong and you may be right', since unless each disparate world-view could be expressed in terms of possible states of affairs in the world and could then be checked against the actual facts, there would be no way in which we could decide between them. (Popper is not, of course, maintaining that in point of fact every basic belief or absolute presupposition is at the present time verifiable or falsifiable by comparison to some state of affairs: this would obviously be a matter of our present state of scientific knowledge. Hence, there may be some "propositions" about which we must simply defer judgement.) These two presuppositions embody what might be termed the myth of universal intelligibility and the myth of hypotheticality. Instead of an absolutism of reason -- the traditional rationalist arbiter of correctness -- they insist on an absolutism of fact. It is against these two myths, the myths of empirico-rationalism, that historicists rebel. Moreover, it is only in terms of the historicist rebellion that Popper's espousal of them makes sense, since they are presuppositions that go completely against Popper's fundamental epistemological position. What has misled Popper is not any belief in these myths -- indeed, he would probably not admit to accepting their validity -- it is a mistaken belief about what is entailed by denying them. What happens if one denies the myths? One is left with the position that it is impossible, even in principle, to decide between conflicting beliefs, that it is impossible to say which beliefs are true and which are false. The consequence of denying these truths, therefore, appears to be relativism. That is the relativism which historicists are accused of fostering, a relativism of truth and of values.

If historicists, by their denial of the validity of the doctrine of absolute revealed truth inherent in rationalism and in empirico-rationalism, were committed to a relativist thesis, then they would be open to that most devastating of arguments so frequently used against relativism, that it is self-refuting. As Strauss puts it:

> Historicism asserts that all human thought or beliefs are historical and, hence, deservedly destined to perish; but historicism itself is a human thought; hence, historicism can be only of temporary validity, or it simply cannot be true. To assert the historicist thesis means to doubt it . . .[15]

Popper, likewise, sees historicism as a form of the paradox of the liar: "[F]or if no genius is exempt from expressing the fashions of his social habitat," he maintains, "then [historicism] itself may be merely an expression of the fashion of its author's social habitat, i.e., of the relativistic fashion of our own day."[16] A devastating argument indeed! It is well to note, however, that among the authors who consider relativism to be "a theory of suicidal character" can be numbered Ortega, and that Collingwood's Essay on Metaphysics, while denying the validity of both rationalism and empirico-rationalism, nowhere pretends to be relativistic.[17] The truth is that historicism is a denial of both rationalism and naive relativism: "Neither rationalist absolutism," says Ortega, "which keeps reason but annihilates life, nor relativism, which keeps life but dissolves reason, are possibilities."[18]

The key to the transcendence of rationalism and relativism is to be found in the analysis of belief statements. Popper himself comes

close to discovering this in his denial of the possibility of what he terms "uncritical rationalism", the view that demands that no statement should be accepted which cannot be proven either by argument or by experience.[19] But Popper, due to a confusion of selection and interpretation, fails to capitalize on his insight. More thorough treatments of belief, treatments which do exploit the point that Popper makes, can be found in the works of Ortega, Collingwood and Wittgenstein. Since each of these authors offers still but a partial treatment of the problem, we shall draw the major insights of each into an organized whole.

Collingwood maintains that each thought that is given expression in words by a person, whether spoken aloud to another or privately to himself, is related to "a great many more thoughts in his mind than are expressed in his statement". He adds that: "Among these there are some which stand in a peculiar relation to the thought he has stated: they are not merely its context, they are its presuppositions."[20] It is this notion of presupposition which sets Collingwood's logic against that of the positivists, since it is this notion which points to the intimate relationship between statement and question. The positivist logic deals only with statements (or propositions), it does not recognize the logical importance of questions. In this, it affirms its most basic metaphysical belief in the idea that empirical statements are all descriptions of the given world and that, therefore, they are all either true or false. This is a belief which, <u>despite his own stress on questions and</u> answers, Popper also, in the final analysis, subscribes to.

As Proposition 1 of his own logic, Collingwood contends that:

"Every statement that anybody ever makes is made in answer to a question."[21] This proposition applies both to those statements which are uttered aloud and to those which are entertained privately. Unless there were some question, there would be no need to utter a statement + although one might still utter nonsense syllables, hum tones or sing songs. The question is, therefore, logically prior to the answer, to the proposition. The next Proposition of Collingwood's logic is: "Every question involves a presupposition."[22] Questions may, of course, involve many presuppositions, but Collingwood makes a distinction between "what a question involves directly and what it involves indirectly". The direct or immediate presupposition is the one from which the question arises. Taking the standard example of 'Have you stopped beating your wife?', this directly presupposes that the addressee has indeed been in the habit of beating his wife. This in itself presupposes many things, e.g., that he has a wife, that there is an institution of marriage, etc. It is these indirect presuppositions which, when valid, make a question "felicitous".[23]

Collingwood now makes another important observation, that "to assume is to suppose by an act of free choice"; this allows for a distinction between kinds of suppositions, that "all assumptions are suppositions, but all suppositions are not assumptions".[24] That this is the case is manifestly true.

> Some [suppositions] are made altogether unawares [comments Collingwood], and others, though the persons who make them may be conscious of making them, are made without any consciousness of the possibility, if it is a possibility, that others might have been made instead.[25]

With these observations and distinctions in mind, Collingwood is preparing the ground to undermine the standard positivist position. Yet he has not gone quite far enough: it may still be argued that the task of rational discussion is to uncover which suppositions are being made in any socio-historical situation and to test the truth of these suppositions. In this way, the tenets of universal intelligibility and the hypotheticality of propositions may yet be saved. This possibility is closed off when the idea of logical efficacy is developed.

The important point about the logical efficacy of a supposition is that it "does not depend upon the truth of what is supposed, or even on its being thought true, but only on its being supposed".[26] This introduces an aspect of propositions distinct from that of their being true or false, viz., that of their being efficacious, in the sense of having effects. This distinction permits a radical departure from the traditional analysis of belief statements. Collingwood prepares for this by maintaining that: "A presupposition is either relative or absolute" (Proposition 4) and stating that: "By a relative presupposition I mean one which stands relatively to one question as its presupposition and relatively to another question as its answer" (Definition 5), but that: "An absolute presupposition is one which stands, relatively to all questions to which it is related, as a presupposition, never as an answer" (Definition 6). Thus, the statement that Fred has been in the habit of beating his wife stands relatively to the question 'Has Fred stopped beating his wife?' as its presupposition and relatively to 'Has Fred been in the habit of beating his wife?' as its answer.

It is, therefore, a relative presupposition. Proposition 6, which maintains that "Absolute presuppositions are not propositions", now completes the chain of argument -- and leaves the positivists, and Popper, in a difficult position. The positivists hold that all statements are either true, false or meaningless; he pays no heed to the efficaciousness of belief-statements. But if there are absolute presuppositions and if such presuppositions are not propositions, then there exist statements which are not susceptible to empirical verification or falsification, or to the hypotheticality thesis, yet which can scarcely be dubbed meaningless. Moreover, the status of these presuppositions becomes of critical importance to the study of history, as these absolute presuppositions will be the most basic beliefs of societies.

As an example of an absolute presupposition, Collingwood cites 'Everything that happens has a cause', a basic belief of all science -- or at least so it was prior to "discoveries" in quantum theory. A pathologist is asked what caused an event E, say, why a person contracted some disease. The pathologist will reply that certain prior events, C_1, C_2, . . ., C_n, caused E. But consider the case where the cause of E is unknown: does the pathologist admit that there is no cause of E? No, he is sure that E does have a cause; it is just that the cause of E has not yet been discovered. What is it that leads him to believe that E must have a cause? His answer will probably be that all events have causes.

> If you are importunate enough to ask 'But how do you know that everything that happens has a cause?' he will probably blow right up in your face, because

> you have put a finger on one of his absolute presuppositions, and people are apt to be ticklish in their absolute presuppositions. But if he keeps his temper and gives you a civil and candid answer, it will be to the following effect. 'That is a thing we take for granted in my job. We don't question it. We don't try to verify it. It isn't a thing that anybody has discovered, like microbes or the circulation of the blood. It is a thing we just take for granted.[27]

Actually, the pathologist will probably not reply in this manner: he will probably look at you as if you were mad or absolutely stupid; but the end result will be the same. The only attempt that could be made to prove this statement true would, on the Popperian analysis, be to test it empirically. That every event has a cause, however, cannot be known to be true unless we already know that the event in question has a cause; and, ex hypothesi, this is precisely what we do not know. (This is the reason that Popper's own method is termed a hypothetico-deductive one.) If Popper attempts to deal with this problem in keeping with his comments about critical rationalism, he must admit that he is involved with an extremely difficult kind of hypothesis, an hypothesis for which there is not (and cannot be) any evidence one way or another. To verify a proposition means to come to a decision as to whether that proposition or its negation is true. But with absolute presuppositions, this is not possible -- or it requires a decision without evidence or criteria, which is totally meaningless. "To speak of verifying a presupposition," says Collingwood, "involves supposing that it is a relative presupposit-

ion."[28] This, we shall see, presents an analogue with the position in which Popper finds himself.

From the point of view of the logic of presuppositions, it is immaterial whether absolute presuppositions actually held are true or false: their entire function is to be supposed. It is their logical efficacy, i.e., the world-view that they reflect and the kinds of questions which they produce, that is important, not their truth or falsity. Because we cannot demonstrate the truth of absolute presuppositions, there is a tendency to dub them beliefs: a belief being simply something which we do not know to be true nor know to be false, yet to which we are in some way committed. In a sense, they are beliefs; but along with the notion of belief there usually goes the notion of evidence: beliefs are held on the basis of evidence. Postitivist logicians and philosophers of science play around with "degrees of probability": belief logics, insofar as they have been developed, usually take the position that it is "rational" to believe a proposition if the evidence in favour of that proposition outweighs the evidence against it, other things being equal. With absolute presuppositions, however, the notion of probability is totally inapplicable, since probability analyses only make sense in terms of statistical frequency. Therefore, when one comes to such absolute presuppositions -- when they are absolute presuppositions -- as 'There exists a God' or 'Every event has a cause' or 'There is an external world', probability analyses are scarcely possible. What, we may ask, are the odds that there is a God or that every event has a cause or that there is an external world? How much evidence speaks in favour of these suppositions and how much speaks against them?

When these are absolute presuppositions, all of the evidence that is available speaks in favour of them, because they themselves structure all of our thought. Wittgenstein comments that: "Whether a proposition can turn out false after all depends on what I make count as determinants for that proposition."[29] The propositions here under consideration turn out themselves to be tne determinants of the determinants. The difference between a man who believes that there is a God and a man who believes that there is no God is not simply that in the first man's world there is a God and in the second man's world there is no God, but all other things remain unchanged.[30] Belief in the existence of a God changes the entire world of the believer: it changes what he will consider acceptable evidence for any proposition that he may entertain. Since presuppositions or beliefs of this nature structure our thought and all of our ideas of evidence and experiment, it becomes impossible to measure the probability of the truth of the presuppositions or beliefs themselves.

To take another example: Imagine a person sitting at his desk in his office. He believes that the chair on which he is sitting will continue to support him. (He believes it, but he may never actually say, 'I believe that this chair will continue to support me'. That he believes it may be evidenced by the fact that if asked whether he believes it, he will answer in the affirmative -- but it is also evidenced by his simply continuing to sit in the chair.) With this belief go several related beliefs. For example, he believes that if he rises and crosses the room, the floor will not suddenly disappear; that if he opens the door, the corridor will still exist outside. That is, he believes in the truth of the constellation of statements

that we might express in an encapsulated form by 'There exists an external world'. We say that he believes these things, because to say that he knows them would imply that he could not be wrong about them -- and there may be philosophical reasons for holding that it is possible that he should be wrong about them. He believes these things, but doubt never enters into the matter. "My life," remarks Wittgenstein, "shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on -- I tell a friend, e.g., 'Take that chair over there', 'Shut the door', etc."[31] If someone did doubt these things -- really did doubt them -- we would not think him a philosopher; on the contrary, we would think him a neurotic or a fool. But although there is no practical doubt, no uncertainty, we still say only that we believe in the existence of the external world. Such beliefs, therefore, are not held hypothetically: no one ever doubts them or thinks to really question them.[32] "They do not seem to us to be theories;" says Ortega, "we do not see them as ideas but as effective reality itself. Therefore, it does not occur to us to doubt them."[33]

These examples teach us that there is not just one dimension to beliefs, their hypotheticality, but two: that we must also consider their efficaciousness. The myth of hypotheticality, which is so deeply ingrained in our Western thought, disappears when we see that ideas do not exist as mere thinks-bubbles, as interesting appendages to life and action but as only tenuously connected to that life and action. It is possible, of course, to think of ideas as immaterial pictures floating above our heads -- or, perhaps, as in our heads -- but this view does not and cannot apply to absolute presuppositions

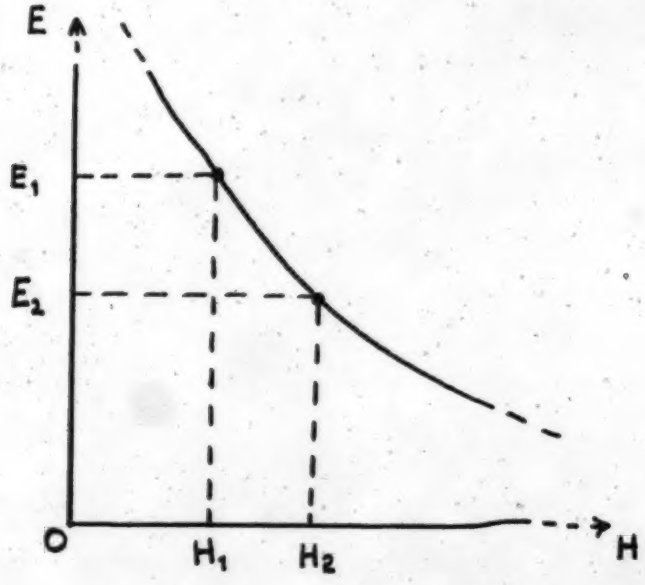
or basic beliefs. Indeed, this view of ideas is totally inappropriate: it is one of those pictures that we have of our world that gives credence to the myth of intellectualism, as Ortega calls it, the myth of the ghost in the machine, as Ryle calls it. Beliefs structure our very lives; they do not stand somehow outside it. We do not simply have these floating images and then tick those which we believe correspond to reality. It is because we believe in the permanency of external objects that we continue to sit in chairs without any fear of falling: our very actions reflect beliefs even though those beliefs never "cross our minds". The absolute presuppositions, indeed, furnish us with our reality.

> A belief [says Ortega] is not merely an idea that is thought, it is an idea which one also believes. And believing is not an operation of the intellectual mechanism, but a function of the living being as such, the function of guiding his conduct, his performance of his task.[34]

This is what the thinks-bubble theory, the intellectualist myth, does not allow for: it treats all ideas, including beliefs, as analogous to or equivalent to imaginings. Belief here takes on a special meaning: it is no longer inferior to knowledge. At this level it is not a case of claiming to believe something because one is not certain of it. Absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs actually underlie those things which we say that we know. All knowledge is knowledge in relation to some substratum of belief.

There is a relationship between the two aspects of belief, but it can be expressed only schematically. If we take some belief, B, and plot its possibilities in terms of efficaciousness, i.e., in terms of

its role as a structuring agent, and of hypotheticality, we obtain a diagram somewhat as shown. From this we can derive the law of the



relative efficaciousness of belief: $[(E_1 > E_2) \rightarrow (H_2 > H_1)]$. That is to say, the greater the efficaciousness of a belief, the lesser will be its hypotheticality. If a belief has a great efficaciousness in some socio-historical environment, then those who subscribe to it will not doubt it to any marked extent.

The two dimensions of belief have led both Collingwood and Ortega to suggest distinctions among presuppositions (Collingwood) and beliefs (Ortega). Thus, Collingwood divides presuppositions into relative and absolute and Ortega divides presuppositions into opinions and beliefs. The distinctions are helpful in dispelling the myth of intellectualism, but they do have their drawbacks. As Collingwood describes absolute presuppositions, it would appear that there is some set of these at the foundation of the world-view of any community of interpretation -- or, rather, that the community's world-view can be

expressed by itemizing the set of absolute presuppositions. Likewise, Ortega distinguishes between opinions, whose truth and falsity can be tested, and basic beliefs, whose function is to structure our thought and action. These are both oversimplifications. It is more likely that no strict demarcation line can be drawn between absolute and relative presuppositions or opinions and beliefs in actual historical contexts. This becomes even more apparent when we consider the relationship between the various absolute presuppositions as they function in Collingwood's system. These absolute presuppositions, according to Collingwood, make up consupponible constellations of beliefs, i.e., sets of beliefs which can be supposed at the same time, although Collingwood is not clear as to the force of this 'can'. This notion of consupponibility, however, is extremely vague. The efficaciousness of absolute presuppositions obviously is able to work not only on the structuring of our experience, but also on other members of the presupposition set. This is possible, because it is not necessary that all absolute presuppositions of any socio-historical culture need to be consistent with each other. This means that although given absolute presuppositions are absolute with respect to some domain of experience, they need not be absolute with respect to all domains of experience. Indeed, there will be parts of the experience of any group which will provide a common ground for the interaction of absolute presuppositions, parts of experience which are structured by more than one absolute presupposition -- and at these points there may well be clashes between "facts" structured by the rival absolute presuppositions. (Philosophy itself may be seen as the

attempt to bring absolute presuppositions into line with one another. The paradoxes with which philosophy is so beset represent the clashes at the level of conscious ideas between absolute presuppositions.) When tensions arise between absolute presuppositions, something has to give: either one gains ascendency over the other or both give way to a compromise. Whichever may be the case, at least one absolute presupposition must lose its absoluteness. Generally speaking, when one absolute presupposition is brought into question, it is in terms of some other related presupposition, since otherwise there would be no means of assessing "independently" the "evidence" against the presupposition. (Thus, belief in the existence of God came under fire only when it was seen as conflicting with other fundamental ideas about the world.) The implication of this is that no presupposition is sacrosanct: any may be eroded -- even the most absolute of presuppositions.[35] Moreover, since the efficaciousness-hypotheticality analysis applies to all beliefs, the most relative and the most absolute, the most superficial and the most basic, all are constantly working on each other. (We will return to this inter-effectiveness of beliefs later: it represents what we shall call the dialectic of thought.) When dealing with absolute and relative presuppositions, therefore, it must always be remembered that they are only absolute or of certain degrees of relativity at specified times.

From the point of view of the individual, these presuppositions or beliefs have their origin in the society as a whole. At any time, in any society, there is a given constellation of beliefs with given E and H factors. The constellation is transmitted to all new members of that society from birth. Each individual becomes a member of the community of interpretation by learning how the world is for that community; and

that involves seeing the world in the light of the presuppositions or basic beliefs of the society. The individual, however, does not learn this world-view in terms of a set of presuppositions: he learns it in terms of how the world really is. As Ortega says: "When something is a collective or social opinion it is a reality independent of individuals, outside them as the stones of the ground, a reality with which each individual must reckon willy-nilly."[36] The individual does not chose or select his view of the world, it is thrust upon him as basic reality: without adopting it, he can have no intercourse with his socio-historical environment. Everything that the individual does must be understood in terms of it, since it provides the world in which he lives. Even his knowledge claims must be understood against this background, as they are knowledge claims about his world. A rational individual he may be, able to reason intelligently and question opinions, but his criteria for the acceptability for the truth of propositions will be structured by the socially given interpretational schema, because he must always test propositions against what there is in his world. A pure individual would be one connected to no such socially given interpretational schema -- not even his own. He would, therefore, be totally incapable of making rational decisions, since these can only be made on the basis of criteria which are suggested by the nature of the world in which he lives.

It may be necessary to correct in advance a possible misunderstanding of this theory of presuppositions. Although "society consists primarily in a repository of usages",[37] teaching of these usages is not carried out consciously, there is no itemizing of the presuppositions or beliefs of a society for the benefit of the initiates. Indeed, the

members of the society may not (and probably will not) be aware of their own presuppositions. There may be no simple list of absolute presuppositions.[38]

> I do not [maintains Wittgenstein] explicitly learn the propositions which stand fast for me, I can discover them subsequently like the axis around which a body rotates. This axis is not fixed in the sense that anything holds it fast, but the movement around it determines its immobility.[39]

The new member of society is inculcated with an entire world-view: everything that he learns about the world is structured by that set of absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs to which his society subscribes. It is not, therefore, a matter of learning these absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs directly, but of soaking them up, as it were, by osmosis: "When we first begin to believe anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (Light dawns gradually over the whole.)"[40] It is tempting to say that we learn first the consequences of the set of presuppositions and reconstruct them later at leisure. This, however, is not quite the case, since the relationship between presuppositions and facts that we learn is one of reflection, not of causal or deductive consequence.

This theory of absolute presuppositions provides an extension to, and the proper foundation of, the Collingwood-Popper chicken-and-egg theory of interpretation. The transition between the two theories is graphically demonstrated by Collingwood in his Speculum Mentis:

> Science [he maintains] is the question whose answer is history. To ask that question implies

> that is already in existence: and thus we get a process of history-science-history. But history on its first appearance is implicit; it is not known for what it is, and is indeed despised as the mere world of empirical or sensuous reality.[41]

This passage is Collingwood's, but it may as easily have appeared in Conjectures and Refutations, so close is it to Popper's treatment. Unfortunately, Popper does not go quite far enough. His failure to embrace a radical historicism is due, as was mentioned, to his refusal to countenance a relativism of truth. He is able to maintain apparent consistency in his system only because at a critical point in his exposition he abondons that system and falls back on "selectionism".

Although Popper recognizes that "no theory is final, and every theory helps us to select and order facts", he oscillates between a theory of science as radically interpretative, as in Collingwood and Einstein,[42] and a theory of science as merely selective. For example, he contends that:

> The reason why all description is selective, roughly speaking, is the infinite wealth and variety of the possible aspects of the facts of our world. In order to describe this infinite wealth, we have at our disposal only a finite number of finite series of words. Thus we may describe as long as we like: our description will always be incomplete, a mere selection, and a small one at that, of the facts which present themselves for description.[43]

When speaking in this vein, Popper sees theories almost literally as searchlights: "What the searchlight makes visible will depend upon its position, upon our way of directing it, and upon its intensity, colour, etc."[44] Seen in this way, the notion of a point of view is strictly

analogous to spatial point of view. The facts are all there, all that makes the difference is the direction from which one sees them, etc. With this kind of analogy in mind, Popper is able to maintain that there is a set of facts -- real, given facts -- which are seen in different lights, from different perspectives, depending upon the point of view chosen. That is to say, he ignores the theoretical nature of the society's interpretation of the world and that the facts only have meaning from the point of view of this interpretational schema. This represents a radical departure, and an unwarranted departure at that, from his main position: it confuses the idea that there are no facts with the idea that there are facts but that which facts we select is a matter of choice.[45] (Possibly, he falls into this error because he confines his comments to theories in science and neglects the problem of knowledge in general: he fails, perhaps, to recognize that "history on its first appearance is implicit".)

Once the theoretical nature of the societal interpretation is realized, however, it becomes apparent that there is no final court of appeal, no independent body of facts outside of the interpretation itself. The absolute presuppositions of the society are theoretical in the sense that they cannot be proven, but they are not held hypothetically. When Popper claims that all theories are provisional, he is either treating all theories as though they possessed high H-coefficients or he is attempting to discuss theories in isolation from the society that holds them, since he would require that theories be tested by appeal to some body of facts independent of the society's interpretational schema -- a schema which is already reflected in the theories. This latter would be meaningless. Popper's theory, therefore, is

appropriate only to superficial theories or beliefs, not to the more deep-seated ones. Since, however, no belief is sacrosanct and deep-seated beliefs may lose their high E-coefficients, they also will eventually become subject to Popper's treatment. It might, therefore, be imagined that Popper is correct in his comments about theories in general. But the great significance of his departure from the strict "history-science-history" theory now becomes apparent. The point is that a presupposition only becomes testable when it has ceased to be absolute and it is only testable in terms of some other, less relative presupposition. Should the question 'Which of the presuppositions is valid?' be raised, it would have no answer: it can only be said at any given time and in any given society that one presupposition possesses a higher E-coefficient that the other, that one plays a greater role in structuring the facts than the other. There would be no way of placing the two side by side and devising independent tests of validity, finding facts independent of both presuppositions against which to test them. This is what Popper fails to notice -- or, if he does notice it, fails to carry to its logical conclusion.

Surely, it would be objected, this is blatant relativism: is it not being maintained that no test is possible of the validity of world-views, that if two world-views (characterized by two sets of absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs) were compared, it would be impossible to decide which, if either, were a genuine reflection of how the world really is? In one sense, that is precisely what is being being maintained; but, in another sense, the claim cannot even be made consistently. Both the statement of that claim and the standard Popper-Strauss objection to relativism suffer from the difficulty that neither

can be framed without absurdity. The problem is not which world-view does reflect how the world is, the problem is against which "world" are we to test the world-views! When it is recognized that the latter and not the former is the genuine problem, the effect on the standard argument against relativism is devastating. To frame the objection that we can never know whether a world-view accurately reflects how the world really is requires that there be a world independent of the interpretation of any world-view; but this is only possible within a rationalist or empirico-rationalist epistemological framework where appeal to independently existing facts about the world makes sense. What is traded on to suggest this possibility is the abstraction of the sensation element of perception from the thought element: only in this way is it possible to refer to an abstract ding-an-sich of the world. As we have seen, however, such an abstraction is illegitimate -- and Popper himself accepts that it is illegitimate. In the historicist view of the world, each society has its own world and each is responsible for that world. There is no super-objective world of fact or moral value against which the individual existing world-views can be tested: each society has its own commitment to a view of the world. This does not deny any value to truth and/or morality. It is man's commitment to a system which is his own system that is important. The world is always my world or my society's world; values are always my values or my society's values. "It is comic in the extreme," as Ortega says, "that historicism should be condemned because it produces or corroborates in us the consciousness that the human factor is changeable in every direction, that there is nothing concrete that is stable."[46] Far from reducing all to anarchy, the historicist position

reaffirms that man is what he makes himself, that he is responsible for everything that he is or does. He lives in his world and changes his world.

4.2 Progress and the Dialectic of Thought: The claim that our position is compatible with man's radical responsibility may be doubted by those who point to the doctrine of the interaction of presuppositions and find there a deterministic system and a doctrine of progress not unlike those of Hegel and Marx. Is it not true, they may object, that the dialectic of presuppositions is independent of the thoughts and actions of the individual people within a society? This may, indeed, appear to be the case -- as it may have appeared that the Marxian dialectic was independent of individual people. We have spoken of absolute presuppositions structuring the society's world and of presuppositions working on one another and of changes coming from the interaction of these presuppositions: This we have called the dialectic of thought. In Hegel and Marx, to be sure, the analogues of this dialectic sometimes give the impression of being self-propelled -- of having no need of individuals to think and act -- and this dialectic does appear to possess some causative power not reducible to individual human agency. What is more, there is in most historicist writing still an insistence on the necessity of geneticism in history, of treating later events as "coming out of" earlier ones, which may give the impression of a progressive-deterministic position. "[E]very phase of history," writes Collingwood, "while it grows out of the preceding phase, sums

it up in the immediacy of its own being and thereby sums up implicitly the whole of previous history."[1] This geneticism often does look like a progressive-ameliorative doctrine. For example, Ortega sees the philosophical past as "a congerie of errors", and remarks that "Our philosophy is what it is because it finds itself mounted upon the shoulders of its predecessors . . .", i.e., it surpasses them.[2] Some concept of progress may be involved here, but it is not necessarily a traditional ameliorative progress. As regards the possibility of a deterministic interpretation of the doctrine of the dialectic of thought, which would amount to a denial of the compatibility of geneticism with individual freedom, this can only be entertained by those who ignore the implications of the analysis of the concrete individual in history. At the risk of repeating what was said in the previous sections, it must now be demonstrated that the dialectic of thought is not incompatible with individualism. This demonstration will also serve to reinforce the view of the closeness of Popper's own epistemological position to an historicist dialectic. First, however, some comments are in order concerning the traditional idea of ameliorative progress, since certain traditional misunderstandings have arisen because of confusions that our position as so far elaborated has attempted to rectify.

The concepts of progression and development, of course, are not identical with the concept of change. To say of something that it is progressing and/or developing is not just to say of it that it has undergone change: it is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of something progressing or developing that it change. What is more important is the nature of the change that takes place. Random change

is not development: development requires the ideas of order and continuity. Sometimes, but not always, it implies the idea of an end or goal. For example, we may speak of the development of a caterpillar: we know the ordered progression of stages and each stage, in a sense, comes out of the one that went before. The end towards which the creature is moving is the final stage of metamorphosis. That the idea of an end or goal is not essential to the idea of development is shown by the common complaint that often we do not know how things will develop. We know that something will come out of the state of affairs that we are considering, but we do not know what it will be. Therefore, the essential consideration with the idea of development is always of a cumulative-linear process, of one state of affairs giving rise to another, of the later stage coming out of the earlier one, but the idea of a known end or goal is not essential. (Note: It is not always appropriate to consider a later stage as the effect of an earlier one. We do not say, for example, that youth is the cause of old age.)

In almost any imaginable instance where the term 'development' may be employed, it is also possible to employ 'progression'. The latter term might be thought to carry with it an implication of amelioration: we often do talk of making progress, i.e., of getting better or of doing things better. But as Mandelbaum points out, "there are times when we speak of the progress of a disease, or speak with regret of the progressive undermining of an idea or of a social system"[3] -- and we ask how things are progressing quite naturally even in cases where we do not believe that things have improved. Typically, however, the sense of development or progress that occurs

in traditional speculative philosophy of history (for example, in Vico, Voltaire, Hegel, Comte and Marx -- although not perhaps in Spengler and Toynbee) is one in which an end or a goal and an improvement is implied. We may not even suspect that the development of the caterpillar involves a movement from an inferior state to a superior one or that old age is an improvement on youth, but when considering the development of history, as discussed, i.a., by Hegel and Marx, the idea of continual amelioration, of something "better" evolving is inescapable.

But how is it that things are supposed to be getting better? There have been three major areas in which both laymen and speculative philosophers of history have "discovered" that progress has been made and is being made: the scientific sphere, the moral sphere and the hedonistic sphere. The problem is: has there been any real progress or has it been presupposed or is something even more fundamental involved? To discover that the whole of history is the story of some kind of progress requires both that progress has been recorded in the past and that prediction informs us that it will continue in the future. Furthermore, one must be able to see the sequence of events -- past, present and future -- as progressing. But is there any real evidence that there has ever been progress in the past or that there is progress going on now? Or is this just an illusion?

The belief that there is in science, if nowhere else, a continual progress is extremely wide-spread -- not the least among scientists themselves and among at least some philosophers of science. Popper himself exhibits scarcely less a mystical vision of the progress of science than Einstein. The position has been stated typically by

George Sarton.

> The history of science [he maintains] might be defined as the discovery of objective truth, of the gradual conquest of matter by the human mind; it describes the age-long and endless struggle for the freedom of thought -- its freedom from violence, intolerance, error, and superstition. The history of science is one of the essential parts of the spiritual history of mankind; the other parts are the history of art and the history of religion. It differs from these in that the development of knowledge is the only development which is truly cumulative and progressive. Hence, if we try to explain the progress of mankind, the history of science should be the very axis of our explanation.[4]

Science, we are unceasingly informed, progresses by submitting its findings and theories to critical tests: only those findings and theories that survive the most rigorous tests are allowed to remain within the corpus of accepted (and acceptable) scientific fact and theory. The effect is that not only do theories of science become progressively more accurate, they also become progressively more inclusive.

This survival theory has not gone completely unchallenged. Recently, such writers as Kuhn, Feyerabend and Tennessen has seemingly been highly critical of it.[5] (The presuppositional analysis presented above, of course, is totally at loggerheads with survivalism.) It is, however, doubtful whether even Kuhn, Feyerabend and Tennessen have seriously undermined the belief in progress so central to modern, nineteenth century conceptions of science. The myth of normal science

may well have been exploded and the idea of science may have been forced to undergo some minor changes, but dreams of progress continue. Against the old dogmatism of continual progress through critical testing, the cry goes up: 'You can be a good empiricist only if you are prepared to work with many alternative theories rather than with a single point of view and "experience".' Dogmatism is to be combatted . . . but the myth of science continues under the new guise that progress is to be ensured by toleration and "theoretical pluralism", i.e., by adhering to the standard Popperian ideals of openness and hypotheticality. Such a proliferation of theories is envisaged as resulting to the greatest possible degree under "plenitude conditions", that is to say, where limitless supplies of monies are made available for scientific research and where no theory will be ignored simply on the grounds that it is "unscientific". These conditions ideally will "permit the researcher to shift [his] loyalties and motivations towards a task-oriented 'unlimited curiosity in all conceivable directions'". Kuhn, Feyerabend and Tennessen have recognized that in the past science has not developed according to the idealized standards of Sarton and Huxley, that scientists -- even the best of them -- have continued to accept "facts" and theories which have been discredited, that change comes only when "crisis point" is reached in science. They have, however, drawn back from any really radical conclusions that might be drawn from these observations and have simply provided us with a way in which they believe it will be possible to preserve science in all of its old glory. The survival theory of science has departed, but only to be replaced by a new kind of dogmatism. Dreams of toleration do not disturb the myth of

progress, they merely offer a different picture of the advance of science and appeal to novel measures to facilitate and ensure that progress. Such dreams, however, have little reality for the waking world.

The doctrine that history displays a continual progress in morality is, perhaps, no longer as popular as it once was. For example, the American Romantic historians (those cousins germains of the early historicists who, although well read in Herder and Grimm, were inspired more by Scott than by Hegel) believed that "the American writer looks on the Past from the highest station reached in human progress", that the "writer's duty was based on the unusual moral purity of his country, on its unique situation as the country most nearly in harmony with divine (or natural) laws".[6] Like Hegel, these historians perceived the march of progress running ever westwards, although for them the trail started and ended later. Nineteenth century English writers were not so geographically minded, but they were no less sure of their moral superiority. According to such writers, progress in morality is inevitable: "Wrong principles could not, in the long run, triumph." And the moral law is seen as the most fundamental causal principle in history, determining all historical change. Although no longer as prevalent in philosophical literature, this Victorian or New England attitude that underlies the beliefs in the Motherland of the Commonwealth and Manifest Destiny retains a firm support among western, so-called civilized societies. Looking back into the past, most members of these societies are aghast at the depths of moral depravity from which mankind has, thankfully, extricated itself. Looking about at the contemporary world, they see how others, less fortunate than they, still languish in sin, still bow down to false idols. Progress is still to be achieved

by rescuing these unfortunate souls, by revealing the Western ethic to them. It might also be possible by some small improvement in our own moral standards -- or, at least, in the moral standards of our fellows.

Likewise, the appeal to a continual progress in human happiness is generally speaking not current in philosophical literature, but does enjoy a certain vogue in society at large. Again, looking back into the past, man is thankful. "In the reign of George I, and for the early parts of that of George II," writes J. H. Plumb, "London was a stinking, muddy, filth-bespattered metropolis, pullulating with slums. Fever of all varieties flourished and infants died like flies; tuberculosis was rampant and took its heavy toll, particularly among young mothers."[7] And London was not a place to be avoided: it was more modern and progressive than most other places at the time; people travelled from all over the world to enjoy its modernity, its luxury. But how could anyone ever question the fact that, with all of the modern technological and medical advances, we are happier than they? Look, too, at the psychological effects that such circumstances must have had on the populace. The randomness with which disease might strike produced a coarseness in manners and in pleasures, a low regard for human life and a bestiality in attitudes -- especially towards criminals and children. Who would question our happier circumstances? Their pleasures were, to say the least, restricted by their technological backwardness and peculiar social mores.

Each of these presumed progresses is, however, an illusion (or a delusion); but even as illusions they point to something of great importance for an understanding of the historical process. Collingwood

maintains that the view that the history of the world is a story of continual amelioration towards the ultimate in enlightenment and happiness "was based on a hedonistic philosophy and a staggering self-complacency" -- and we might add: 'on a staggering conceit'.[8] "The eighteenth century Frenchman who invented it," continues Collingwood, "thought that the pleasantness of the life of any particular man varied, had always varied, and always would vary, in direct proportion to his resemblance to an eighteenth century Frenchman." One is reminded of those who, pointing to themselves, proclaim: 'I am the result of a million years of evolution'. What conceit . . . but what understandable conceit! If we look back at the Hanoverian pleasures, we are naturally aghast: we see bull-baiting, bear-baiting, goose-riding and a general gratuitous brutality. If we look at Hanoverian morality, we experience a similar sense of the superiority of our own age. The reason that we see the Hanoverian pleasures and morality as inferior to our own is quite simple: <u>they are not our pleasures, it is not our morality</u>. Holding certain hedonistic and moral values entails, inter alia, <u>believing that these are superior to other values</u>. If one thought that one would derive more pleasure, say, from ripping the necks off greasy geese than from watching 'The Edge of Night' on television, one would try it; if one believed that having innumerable mistresses was morally permissible, one would openly take innumerable mistresses. These things are not beyond our capabilities; but we do not do them, because we do not believe that they would make us happier or more moral. As Collingwood observes: "Whether you think that the course of events is an upward or a downward course depends not on it but on you. It is a matter of taste. It depends on what sort of things you like."[9] In judging past times as actually inferior

either in happiness or in morality, we must, therefore, pay heed to Shaw's Golden Rule: "Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same." If one is committed to a value-system, it is obvious that one will consider any movement towards the realization of that system as an improvement and any movement away from it as a deterioration. If one is a liberal, believing that all men have equal rights to happiness and "the good life", one commiserates with the Hanoverian and with the Hottentot and the Polynesian -- and these latter one even tries to convert. Such is the efficaciousness of belief. But the Hanoverian and the Hottentot and the Polynesian were/are also committed to their own value-systems and would probably find our enlightened values ridiculous and paltry. Imagine the Hanoverian blade enthusiastically following 'The Edge of Night'. They may have believed that better sanitation and medical knowledge would have been an improvement; but there is no guarantee that they would have opted for such "improvements" had they known that it would change their entire ways of life.

All that might be well and good when discussing pleasure or morality, it might be objected, such spheres are mere reflections of taste; but when it comes to science, we have an entirely different kettle of fish. Here there is obvious progress. A different kettle of fish maybe, but the stench of the fish is as equally odious.

Frequent attempts have been made to explain the amazing phenomenon of the growth of modern science. These attempts have been interesting not only for the light that they have thrown on the scientific process, but also for that thrown on the relationship between science and social values. Modern science has been linked with the rise of the Protestant

ethic and the rise of the capitalist development of industry and commerce that has accompanied it. The relations between the ideals of each and their startling rise, and fall, together bear irrefutable witness to this. Whether the rise of science and of capitalism can be reduced to secondary importance as mere off-shoots of the Protestant asceticism, of its attempt to discover God in nature, or whether the Protestant ethic and science can be reduced to results of the capitalist fervour for acquisition, is irrelevant. No reductionist thesis is either required or intended. Nor is there any intention to cast doubt on the validity of belief in scientific or moral or hedonistic progress on the grounds that any of them is suspect by association. The entire reductionist thesis, as propounded, inter alia, by Marx, is misconceived. What is important is not some ultimate dependence of one on another but just the intimate relationships and interactions between them.

We tend still to regard science as being of recent origin: before Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Newton, etc., science did not really exist; there was only religious dogma, worship of the ancients and hermetic superstition. From all of these science has delivered us. The truth, we are told, will make us free -- and, perhaps, more happy and more moral. What we often fail to see is, first, that science, the objective pursuit of truth, has always existed (as have religion and commerce), and, second, that what is practised today under the name 'science' is radically different in its approach and presuppositions from what was practised by the First Fathers of science. The research of the alchemists was no less scientific than the later work of the mechanists, it simply dealt with a different world. The world of science is not in some mysterious way separable from the more commonsense world of every-

day experience; the scientist cannot simply switch off his world-view as he puts on his lab-coat. The general values that a scientist holds in his life he also takes into the laboratory; his general view of what the world is like he takes as well. Life cannot be divided into air-tight compartments, each separated off from all the rest; life is lived as a whole. Moreover, as we have seen, it is impossible to decide between rival world-views: impossible to say whether, for example, the hermetic view of the universe is superior to or inferior to the mechanical view. Both views reflect attempts to be as precise as possible, and to discover as many facts as possible, about certain worlds -- it is only the worlds that are different. It follows then that to speak of progress, even in science, depends upon where one stands. To an alchemist, say, the discovery of the omega-minus particle would not be considered progress: what does it tell us about the universal sympathy of nature? There may well be progress within each kind of science, because each kind of science knows the direction in which it is going and the kinds of data and theories that are acceptable to it . . . but progress will always be relative to the kind of science being considered. When a different world-view asserts itself, the progress of the previous stage, if not assimilated and re-interpreted, will count as nothing. And just as with happiness and morality, we will see as progress only that kind of science which approaches our own and as deterioration -- as a return, perhaps, to religion and superstition -- any kind of science which departs from the basic values of our own.

The process of scientific investigation does, however, provide a valuable insight into the manner of change of societal world-views.

The scientist works within a community of interpretation: he possesses a world of facts from which to begin his investigations: He has a "history". Even in periods of "normal" science, however, the scientist is not content to rest on the laurels of this history, he is always asking questions about that world. It is this questioning, performed by individuals, this activity of science, which changes the complexion of the world in which he lives, by no matter how little. The answers to the questions which the scientist asks provide a more or less different world in terms of which his successors will work: he provides a new history. At any point in time, in any society, there exists an interpretational schema, a set of beliefs about the nature of things, in terms of which the scientist, like any other member of that society, understands the "facts" of the world. This may be called the philosophy of existence of the people: it is the society's view of how the world is. But the maintenance or alteration of this schema is the responsibility of the individuals within that society: it is their commitment and their thought that either supports the structure or seeks to change it. The system of interpretation is always "tardigrade" with respect to the individual.[10] It represents that system from which the individual begins (the egg or the history). The forward edge of history is always individuals acting within a socio-historical context and acting on that context -- no matter how deliberately. If society remains in a normal state, it is only because the individuals do not see the necessity for changes, because they are content and see no fundamental problems arising within their world-view, within their world. If a period of scientific revolution arrives, it is because individuals see a crisis within the traditional way of viewing the

world, see a need to change. The change in world-view may not be quite as well planned as all that -- there obviously will be what Popper calls unintentional effects of intended actions. Typically, a contented populace pursues its own kind of happiness, its own kind of morality, within its own world. The mere continuance of the way of life itself may force change. This is what Marx suggests happens to capitalism and any other social system. Thus, sometimes the unforeseen consequences of actions and thoughts may be more startling than the intended results.

Be that as it may, only human beings think and act; therefore, only human beings, individuals, can bring about changes in world-views. Even when they are stampeding to sell gold or to buy groceries, actions which may inadvertently bring about the exact crisis which they are attempting to forestall, it is only through their actions that changes in the system can come about. These individuals are members of communities of interpretation; they are not, therefore, the empty "rational" husks that Watkins seems to require who can envisage all theories of the world and dispassionately choose between them. They live in a world supplied by their society and their questions arise within that world -- even though their answers may change that world. They cannot simply cut themselves adrift and imagine world upon world, then sift through the various concoctions for a utopia. Tennessen's idea of the millenium is as inappropriate as Strauss' comment that only belief in natural law can prevent us blindly adopting cannibalism. The scientific hypotheses that will be suggested will be tied to the world-view of the scientists concerned, they will be related to the problems that face those scientists within that world, and will be answered in

terms intelligible to those scientists. In the same way, changes in moral perspective will come about through questions being asked within a world-view of a moral nature and they will be answered in terms intelligible to the community. The answers always arise within a context of a world as responses to questions generated by that world-view. Implications of determinism, however, can arise only when this process is seen, by abstraction, in isolation from the individuals involved in it. In reality, no such separation is possible. There is no essential incompatibility between geneticism and individualism: all that one must see is that it is thinking and acting individuals who provide the forward thrust, the cutting edge, of history. Popper is himself committed to this history-science-history or egg-chicken-egg dialectic: his only reason for not going further than he does was the threat of irrationalism and determinism. Now we can see that both of these threats were no more than mere spectres.

Popper, of course, puts the scientist in the forefront of the evolutionary process of ideas. It is the scientist, presumably, who poses the most crucial questions: indeed, science is precisely this posing of questions. The answers which the scientist discovers then become themselves the "new tradition", they become history. Popper's view of science, which he inherits from Einstein, is, however, extremely idealized. It need not be the case, and generally is not the case, that science is in the forefront of the evolutionary process. Science, although ostensibly the pursuit of knowledge about the world, does not necessarily reflect the greatest "advances" in our world-view. Science is, after all, only one activity among many in which men participate; and often the problems that man faces there are relatively

superficial: they are abstract, apart from the main current of human life (e.g., the search for the omega-minus particle). Even within science there are divisions and rivalries. Sometimes the theories and paradigms of physics are in the vanguard, sometimes those of biology or theology. But generally, the most profound changes occur where life is lived to its fullest. It is in these situations where the greatest pressure is exerted on traditional interpretations, where the contemporary problems test the traditional views and where these traditional views are eventually overthrown. At such points there is often a clash between basic beliefs which until that time had been thought totally consupponible: there is always an erosion or a crisis -- a failure of the traditional interpretation to cope with the situation.

As for the liberal contention that science frees us from religion, intolerance and superstition, this is simply an example of one side of our world-view praising the other. Remember: exactly the same claim was made by the hermeticists with respect to their science, a science now considered mere superstition itself. There is no guarantee that any of the discoveries of modern science will advance the cause of happiness or morality one iota. Recent work by Italian geneticists on the possibility of transmuting unicellular organisms, far from achieving a fundamental break-through in genetic engineering and mysteriously improving the human lot, could just as easily cause the annihilation of the entire human race. Attempts to produce cheap fuels by the use of atomic energy might have the same effect. What is more, what do we do on the liberal view when the time comes that only a decrease in happiness and/or the material comforts of life or, perhaps, even a decrease in personal freedom can ensure that sufficient funds and

sufficient secrecy available to continue with the "disinterested" pursuit of this great science of ours. Far from its being an a priori impossible situation, it is, perhaps, one that is already with us.

The history-science-history dialectic can be seen to work in many spheres of human endeavour. Two of the most obvious of these are the spheres of general philosophy and ethics. A consideration of these may make even clearer the position of the individual with respect to the societal world-view with which he is imbued. "Man," comments Ortega, "commonly lives intellectually on the credit of the society in which he lives, a credit that has never been mentioned."[11] This is reflected in the fact that the Victorian or New England attitude both in morals and in pleasures is so wide-spread: most people are content with and do not question the superiority of the values of their own society. It is also reflected in what we might term the penultimate phase syndrome. A recurrent trait of speculative philosophies of history is that the end of history is near, that the next stage will be the last. (Witness the writings of Voltaire, Comte, Hegel and Marx.) The philosophers who support such utopian views are generally at odds with the general public who see the present values as the best possible values: the philosopher wishes to change the order, the general public wish to maintain the status quo. The philosopher looks more closely at the situation and sees problems with it: he looks at the standard and accepted answers and sees difficulties with them. Since society at any time represents the objectifications of the values of the members of society, it is necessarily tardigrade with respect to those who are the most forward thinkers. And, as Ortega observes: "Unable to find lodging among the philosophies of the past, we have to

attempt to construct one of our own."[12] The philosopher must discover new answers and, thereby, suggest new possibilities for the society as a whole. Since, however, the answers which these philosophers give themselves reflect the values of the philosophers, they are necessarily seen by their authors as the best -- and, therefore, as incapable of improvement. Plato's Republic had no need of change, nor would the societies projected by philosophers need to change -- they were already perfection.

Since we have maintained that philosophy can be seen as the attempt to resolve problems between absolute presuppositions and to solve the pressing problems of society, it might be thought that philosophy, not science, is most prominent in the progress of ideas. But this would be an equally idealized a view as that of Popper -- if by 'philosophy' is meant the academic philosophy practised in the universities. Although philosophers have sometimes led the field in breaking down traditional views, it is not the case that they always have. Indeed, academic philosophers, like academic scientists, have frequently proven most conservative and intractible in their attitudes. We may, however, wish to distinguish here between academic philosophy and practical philosophy, between academic science and practical science. If practical philosophy (as history) is that view of the world that is actually current in any society, then academic philosophy may be as much a reflection of it as any other objectification in society. Academic philosophers (or scientists) are in no privileged position in shaping practical philosophy. We may even wish to call practical philosophy or practical science 'real science' and consider academic philosophy and academic science as secondary: but this would

be a matter purely and simply of terminology.

It is here that an emendation to the Collingwoodian analysis is necessary. Collingwood stipulates that it is the task of philosophy to study the absolute presuppositions of societies; that, therefore, philosophy and history are identical. Philosophy and history are, in a sense, identical; but not in the sense indicated by Collingwood. The philosopher is not a mere historian, he is concerned to discover the ultimate truths of the universe -- or, at least, certain kinds of ultimate truths about the universe. The historian of philosophy may plot the attempts of past philosophers in this endeavour, but the philosopher, per se, actually carries out the endeavour. The working out of ideas, the discovery of truth, is the working out of history; thus, philosophy as process is history as process, not history as discipline. As a succession of attempts to arrive at truth, philosophy is history; as a record of attempts to arrive at truth, it is historiography in its most crystalline form. This is so because the philosopher attempts to be as precise as possible about the world; and, since this world is the world of his society, he will, if he is successful, provide the most profound statement of his society's view of the world despite himself -- and should also be in the best position to discover deficiencies and incompatibilities in that view.

The crisis of moral values, as has been observed, has often been attributed to the rise of historical consciousness. Both Popper and Strauss have deplored the possibility that moral values would be annihilated by historicism. If what is morally right were merely a factor of social convention, does moral right not become no more than mere caprice -- or, at worst, a matter of counting heads or judging

relative propaganda abilities. Actually, the case of morality is identical with the case of science and with the case of general philosophy. A person is born into a society which adheres to certain moral values. The individual, in this situation, sees problems with the morality of his own society; therefore, he seeks to change the values of that society. Alternatively, and more likely, the individual accepts the values of the society and does nothing about them. Strauss completely misinterprets the situation with respect to morality. The individual is initiated into his society and is presented with moral values in the same way in which he is presented with the facts of the physical world: as bare facts of nature. It is never a matter of <u>choosing</u> arbitrarily some value system: choice never enters into the matter. In the case of socio-historical culture groups, we would expect the sentiment of Bishop Wilberforce's poem to be fulfilled.

> If I were a Cassuwary,
> and lived in Timbuctoo,
> I would eat a missionary,
> hymn book, Bible and cassock, too.

We would expect this to be the case, but we would not expect it to imply any lack of freedom on the part of the individual inhabitant of Timbuctoo. We would expect it, because that individual is a member of a socio-historical culture group, a concrete individual within a culture that possesses a certain world-view. And the analysis of concrete individuals has shown us that there is no lack of freedom of the will involved in treating individuals also as members of socio-historical culture groups -- that, indeed, that is the only way in

which we can treat individuals, if we are to consider them as historical agents at all. The societal value system is given; initially the individual becomes committed to this system -- it represents to him simple fact. The thinking individual, however, sees inconsistencies within the system and he attempts to resolve them. Of course, the only guides that he can employ are given also by the general outlook of the society. This explains why changes in morality are never sudden, but evolve slowly: people do not arbitrarily switch moralities. People are committed to moralities and, therefore, they question them only when aspects of them are found wanting. From the point of view of the historical process, this may give the impression of morality evolving in and of itself, by its own power and through its own internal struggling. To view morality from such a perspective, however, would be to ignore that it is always people who have and are committed to moralities and that only people can make changes in the sphere of thought.

Some liberal historicists, like Dilthey and Croce, seem to believe that history has replaced philosophy and science as the enquiry that will set man free (whatever this means). The study of history is supposed to show man what his historical possibilities are; the great array of moral codes that man has followed and the great array of causes that man has championed are supposed to provide a liberating effect from moral myopia. Whether this is so or not is, perhaps, an undecided question: one which might be carried out in the same vein as that of the place of great men in history, at a pseudo-empirical level. Does the knowledge of man's historical possibilities weigh on him more than his commitment to his own moral values? Whatever the

answer to this question, if there is one, it will remain the case that any decision about moral values must be arrived at and endorsed by human individuals.

Neither in science, nor in general philosophy, nor in morality can the historicist view of mankind and of the historical process be accused of fostering determinism, arbitrariness or irrationalism. Only by an illegitimate abstraction, which attempts to separate the individual from society and from the historical process, can such a possibility be suggested. It is true that the historicist treats all societal world-views as being equally valid, as all being "equally close to God". This is because there is no way of deciding between any of them; but this does not imply either a lack of values or a lack of truth. Truth and value are always and only a function of world-views and are, therefore, always and only the responsibility of the individuals who espouse those world-views. Once this is realized, the proper relationship between the individual in society and the beliefs of that society can be appreciated. It is, therefore, by application of the concept of the concrete universal and the concrete individual that the problems of both holism and irrationalism are to be overcome.

4.3 Rational Explanation in History: The doctrine of absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs and their role in the historical process that has been developed has been shown to be adequate for diachronic explanations or descriptions in history, i.e., for explaining how on

a large scale world-views change through time. That is to say, such a doctrine provides us with a skeleton idea of the historical process of a kind typically found in speculative philosophies of history. It now remains to be seen whether this doctrine, together with the interpretational epistemology of Popper and Collingwood and the doctrine of the concrete universal can also be used to underwrite the explanation of particular historical actions and events. It is not intended here to supply an exhaustive answer to problems of historical explanation, but simply to indicate the general direction that solutions to such problems must take.

The kinds of occurrences in which historians are interested are actions of historical agents and events brought about by such actions; natural phenomena are of interest to the historian only insofar as they have significance for historical agents.[1] An historical explanation, therefore, will be an explanation of why some historical agent(s) acted in the manner that he/they did or of what actions performed by historical agents brought about some event(s). Since the historian is concerned primarily with actions and not with natural phenomena, he is always interested in events which have an "inside" as well as an "outside". This distinction, made by Collingwood, is intended to demonstrate the difference between the natural and the historical sciences. The outside of an event consists of "everything belonging to it which can be described in terms of bodies and their movements". This may give the impression that the outsides of all events can be described in completely physical terms. The insides of events consists in "that in [them] which can only be described in terms of thought".[2] On this account, the kinds of

events studied by natural scientists can be seen to possess only outsides, whereas the events studied by historians (and by other human or social scientists) can be seen as possessing both outsides and insides: "an action is the unity of an outside and an inside of an event".[3] Therefore, whereas the natural scientist can only understand the phenomena with which he is concerned by bringing them under general laws, the historian can penetrate "behind" the outsides of the events with which he is concerned and can discover the thoughts and beliefs of the agents. This provides an entirely different kind of understanding in the historical sciences from that found in the natural sciences. It is a kind of understanding which is possible only because the historian is a human individual and the events which he is studying are human phenomena. "We are," Dilthey maintains, "first of all historical beings and, after that, contemplators of history; only because we are the one do we become the other."[4]

This distinction, however, may be somewhat misleading, since it may foster the impression that the insides of actions are somehow separable from their outsides and that there is a causal relationship between the thought "behind" an action and that action considered as a physical phenomenon. In the diagram, Mister Spassky is pictured as "thinking of" or "having the idea of" moving his Queen to King's-Bishop-4 (see over). This idea, together with a determination to act, "causes" his hand to move in a certain manner: the piece of carved wood is raised from one position on the board, is transported through space and is deposited in another position on the board. Here we have a physical occurrence apparently caused by a mental occurrence.

This account of the relationship between thought and action is a natural corollary of the traditional view of thought: it is part of what Ryle has dubbed "the myth of the ghost in the machine".[5] This account, however, is yet another example of an illegitimate abstraction: <u>action can never be totally divorced from thought without ceasing to be action</u>. Nor is action to be distinguished from other physical occurrences simply on the grounds that it is caused by thought. This temptation to regard action and thought as causally connected results from, or is a reflection of, the thinks-bubble theory of thought; it also derives from the mistaken belief that, because action can be superficially described in physical terms alone, it is possible to eliminate the thought-side completely or consider the action in isolation from the thought-side. A little reflection, however, will show that such an abstraction of action from thought is impossible.

A description of Spassky's chess move, for example, that was couched exclusively in physical language and escnewed all mention of thought would render that "move" a non-action, it would become simply a physical movement. Only by surreptitiously importing a thought-side into such sentences as 'The hand lowered the Queen to such-and-such a position' can any semblance of action be retained. The relationship between thought and action is not that of cause and effect but that of what is expressed to its expression. (It is precisely for this reason that our dialectic of thought cannot be seen as analogous to the Marxian dialectic in which there exists an underlying causative substructure.) Collingwood himself is careful not to speak of causes and effects in this context. "For history," he says, "the object to be discovered is not the mere event, but the thought expressed in it. To discover that thought is already to understand it. After the historian has ascertained the facts, there is no further process of enquiry into their causes. When he knows what happened, he already knows why it happened."[5] This last sentence might strike one as mystifying, but only until one realizes that it expresses the conviction that the thought "is not something other than the event, it is the inside of the event itself".[6] This claim, however, should not be restricted to knowing what and knowing why, but is appropriate even for hypotheses suggested by the historian about what and why. Since all actions have an inside and an outside which are inseparable, the historian cannot conjecture about what it was that was done by some historical agent without conjecturing about the thought-side of that agent's action. To understand an action is always and only to understand its thought-side. It is because action can only be understood

in terms of the thought that it expresses that all history is the history of thought.

Actually, Collingwood might be thought to be overstating his case. It may be true that no action can be given a completely physical description in isolation from some thought-content without ceasing to be considered as an action, e.g., to express the sentence 'Brutus killed Caesar' simply in terms of the movements of physical entities would remove all notion of thought from it. Once one does describe that action as an action, some thought will enter into the description. But it is possible to describe action is more or less detail. Thus, one could simply say that Brutus killed Caesar, which would not really say why the action was performed at all. What Collingwood seems to require is a "complete" description of the act. This would, of course, give also the whole reason by Caesar was killed, because it would detail the exact nature of the action. But not all historical descriptions are detailed and we have seen that it is not possible to give a "complete" historical description anyway. Therefore, Collingwood's comment should not be accepted too literally.

The discovery of the thought that is expressed by any action is for Collingwood, as for Dilthey and Croce, a matter of re-thinking or re-living the thoughts of the historical agent in one's own mind. "The historian of philosophy, reading Plato," contends Collingwood, "is trying to know what Plato thought when he expressed himself in certain words. The only way in which he can do this is by thinking it for himself."[7] Such talk of re-thinking is fraught with the possibility of misunderstandings and Collingwood, notoriously, does little to forestall misinterpretations. One common complaint against

the re-thinking thesis is that most actions do not possess a thought-side "in the sense of being done for reasons consciously entertained". If there were no original thought, it is argued, then there can be no re-thinking. This objection again betrays a tendency to regard thought and action in the traditional manner. But an answer can be given to the objection which will demonstrate how what has been said about belief can be fitted into what Collingwood says about re-thinking -- even if it does not actually coincide with what Collingwood himself says in, e.g., The Idea of History. Hints to the answer can be found in Dilthey's comment that "Man knows himself only in history, never through introspection . . ."[8] and Dray's observation that "[I]f the agent is to understand his own actions, i.e., after the event, he may have to do so by constructing a calculation in exactly the same way [as he would if he were attempting to understand the action of someone else], although at the time he recited no propositions to himself".[9]

The historical agent acts within a socio-historical situation and within a larger socio-historical environment, an environment which may or may not resemble our own. His actions, since they are his actions, can only be understood in terms of that situation and within that environment. They will be understood by discovering what kind of person he was and by discovering what he took the situation to be in which he acted. There are, of course, reasons why it is important that we have an idea of what a given situation was really like, e.g., when the agent himself had misread the situation or when we wish to find out why the consequences of his actions were what they were. But, initially, the historian's concern must be with how

the agent saw the situation. Now, the historical agent himself would not normally propositionalize the situation: he does not repeat to himself "silently in his head", say, 'The typewriter is in front of me, the lamp is pointing in the wrong direction'; he simply sees that the typewriter is in front of him and that the lamp is pointing in the wrong direction. Nor need he say to himself, 'If I wish to have proper illumination, I must redirect the lamp'. Seeing the situation and seeing what must be done do not necessarily involve any propositions at all -- and generally do not. There are, of course, situations in which the agent must "think" what he should do. In such cases, he may well "go over in his head" what the situation is and what the alternatives for action are. Although not all cases in which thought or belief are involved are of this kind, this deliberating or planning or calculating is often taken as the paradigm of thinking -- even as the only kind of thinking. It is this conflation of thinking with deliberating or planning or calculating that generates the objection which we are considering against Collingwood. Were it but realized that this type of private monologue is not thinking, or is not the only kind of thinking, the objection would lose its weight. Unfortunately, the undue stress on such "thinking" has been increased by those, like Dray, who appear to have interpreted 'rational explanation' in too restricted a sense. These authors generally equate rationality with some kind of reasonableness, although not, perhaps, in the same way that Popper does. Thus, Dray writes: "Understanding is achieved when the historian can see the reasonableness of a man's doing what this agent did given the beliefs and purposes [of the agent]; his action can then be explained as having been an 'approp-

riate."[10] Such talk may suggest that the agent seeks the action which is reasonable from among his action-possibilities and then performs that reasonable action. In this kind of exercise, deliberation, planning and calculation are naturally to be expected. But, in the first place, not all action does involve deliberation or planning or calculating. Thinking (or believing) that everyone in the world is against one, for example, need not involve saying to oneself that everyone in the world is against one -- nor does thinking (or believing) that the floor will continue to support one or that the corridor continues to exist on the other side of the door necessitate any conscious reflection. Since these are not the kinds of "thoughts" that one would expect to be entertained in the first place, it is scarcely an objection to maintain that Collingwood's thesis fails <u>because</u> the thoughts that are reconstructed were not originally entertained by the historical agent. Moreover, it is not the case that rational explanation should be restricted to those actions which are commonly considered reasonable -- unless the term 'reasonable' is stretched in such a way that Popper, at least, might not allow. Many historical agents act unreasonably, some even act in ways which we would consider irrational -- which is by no means the same thing -- yet we would still attempt to gain an understanding of the actions of those agents. Rational explanation must be extended to cover all actions performed from some <u>rationale</u>, i.e., all actions expressing beliefs and purposes, motives and moral principles, and even psychological traits of historical agents. (Dray's own position seems to allow for this extension of rational explanation: he appears to use 'reasonable' not be mean 'according to some universal criteria of reasonableness', but

more generally 'for reasons'.) Once one begins to extend the scope of rational explanation, the simple analysis of thought traded on by the objection becomes totally inappropriate. It is obvious that it is not the case that, e.g., jealousy and greed, which are "behind" many actions, involve thinking of the kind that would be required by the objection.

The counter to the objection must be pressed one stage further. Since the historical agent is acting within his world, within his socio-historical environment, the essential part of the historian's task is to reconstruct that world. Only in this manner could the historian claim to be seeing the situation in the way in which the agent himself sees it. This means discovering the world-view of the agent in terms of his absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs. But the absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs of a society are not generally propositionalized at all by the members of that society -- those members are often not aware that they subscribe to any set of absolute presuppositions or basic beliefs, they simply see the world in a certain way. Therefore, there is a real sense in which thought is never a simple matter of internal picturing or silent monologues such as the detractors of Collingwood demand. Indeed, even when a belief is propositionalized, is "rehearsed in the mind", that silent monologue and/or private cinematographic display is not the belief itself, nor the "entertaining" of the belief, <u>it is simply a private expression of the belief</u>. It is not necessary that this internal expression of thought always does take place; but, even when it does, it is only an expression and is in no way more central with respect to the understanding of beliefs than any other kind of expression. Indeed, we

must note that internal expressions are of no use at all to historians.

Collingwood himself is, perhaps, most responsible for this view that re-thinking or re-living involves discovering and rehearsing over to oneself the "propositions" in the minds of historical agents. His examples are invariably of pieces of deliberation, planning or calculation, or of understanding philosophical, mathematical or social theories, i.e., they are examples of what we might term 'well thought out' actions -- where action often includes pieces of explicit theorizing. Moreover, Collingwood obviously does subscribe to the belief that in re-thinking or re-living the historian is not only knowing what the historical agent did but is also re-doing what the historical agent did.[11] And what the historical agent did is most often characterized as reflective, as well thought out. Indeed, Collingwood even claims that only such actions as are well thought out can be understood: "Reflective acts may be roughly described as the acts which we do on purpose, and these are the only acts which can become the subject-matter of history."[12] As if doing something on purpose required this kind of thinking.

This belief of Collingwood's appears to be the result of two errors. First, he subscribes to the view that the mind is transparent to its "owner", that nothing can exist in the mind of which the mind is not aware. This is part-and-parcel of the Cartesian myth which has been adequately disposed of by Ryle and Sartre. Most psychological states cannot be categorized under the heading of either "thinking", experiencing or feeling. The view, therefore, that the mind is transparent, that all of its contents are "visible", to its owner cannot be correct, since in many cases there are no contents (for example,

knowing what one's mother looks like does not imply having a picture of one's mother in one's "mind eye"), and there are other cases where thinking, experiencing or feeling account for only part of the meaning of mental predicates (for example, being jealous or angry). What is more, even where there are "contents", it is often possible for the owner of the state to be mistaken as to its nature (for example, he may not know whether the feeling that went with his sudden outburst was indicative of jealousy or of righteous indignation -- just as he may not be able to judge from the action alone). Sartre expresses this by saying that "[T]he ego is outside, in the world. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another."[13] And Ryle by saying that one learns about one's own states of mind in the same way that one learns about the states of minds of others.[14] Second, Collingwood believes that, if the object of knowledge is a thought, then it "can be known only insofar as the knowing mind re-enacts it and knows itself as doing so".[15] Although it may be the case that the historian can understand the category of thought only because he, too, is a thinking being, it is not obvious that one can only understand the thought of another by making it one's own thought. An historian may discover that an historical agent acted in the way that he did because he was jealous or because he was full of righteous indignation: The historian may understand such "thought" because he knows from his own case and from being a member of a community of interpretation that has learned a language game of a certain kind what it is like to be jealous or to full of righteous indignation; he does not have to reproduce that jealousy or that righteous indignation in himself, he need only see the relation of the appropriate thought to the action performed. Collingwood claims

that the historian has to redo what the historical agent did, but the historian never recrosses the Rubicon as Caesar did. Is it possible, one may ask, to re-live only the thought-side of an action if the thought-side and the outside are two inseparable parts or aspects of the same thing? Actually, for the historian only the reconstruction of the thought-side is possible, but that is all that is necessary. The historian's task is not to recreate the actual state of affairs, per se, but simply to understand what the state of affairs was like.

There is, however, some excuse for Collingwood treating the understanding of thought in the way that he does -- apart from the seductiveness of the examples of well-thought-out actions that he so frequently employs. Although there are many ways of expressing thought, the normal manner of understanding thought and of transmitting one's understanding to others is through language. Thus, knowing or believing that A believed X will most probably involve the historian asserting or assenting to the proposition 'A believe X' or 'A believed that X'. This is definitely the kind of knowing or believing that suggests propositionalization as a centrally relevant feature. From here it is a simple step to believing that, because X is "in one's mind", X must exist in one's mind as a thought. Yet this is not a step that we must take, nor is it one that we ought to take. The reason why we ought not to take it may be discerned from what was said earlier about the hypotheticality and efficaciousness of belief. The step that ought to be taken from 'A believed X' or 'A believed that X' is not one in the direction of "re-entertaining" that belief, a step based on the thinks-bubble theory of belief, but one in the direction of recognizing what such a belief would lead to, how it would be

expressed through action in an historical context, i.e., the correct step is one which emphasizes the efficaciousness of belief.

Collingwood's own treatment of the understanding of historical thought -- and, hence, of the understanding of all history -- betrays a continuing influence of the thinks-bubble theory of thought. His emphasis on the hypotheticality aspect of belief is evidenced in his remark that re-thinking must always be critical.

> This re-enactment . . . [he maintains] is not a passive surrender to the spell of another's mind; it is a labour of active and therefore critical thinking. The historian not only re-enacts past thoughts, he re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgment of its value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it.[16]

This pre-occupation with the hypotheticality of thought, when conjoined with the notion of making the thought of the agent one's own, leads Collingwood into the claim that: "There is only one kind of thinking that may happen in the mind, of which it can be said that the very fact of its happening would render it impossible for us to know it was happening: namely being under an illusion or error."[17] According to Collingwood's view, one cannot knowingly embrace an error as one's own; one cannot, therefore, understand a thought or an action which is the expression of a thought, if that thought is "an illusion or error". One is reminded here of a similar claim made by Collingwood, criticized by Watkins in "Explaining Disaster", to the effect that "only successful solutions to problems are understandable".[18] It is surely the case, however, that one can understand an action as manifesting a

thought which is even completely erroneous. Indeed, if it were not, there would be scarcely any history to be written at all. Consider, for example, the belief held by Lord Beaverbrook in 1940 that giving civil servants one day off in four would destroy the British war effort and ensure a victory for Hitler.[19] Beaverbrook's opposition to Sir Horace Wilson makes sense only in terms of this belief. We know that Beaverbrook held the belief, he expressed it in word and deed, and we can see in the light of more contemporary psychological theory that it was probably a mistaken belief. This does not mean, however, that we cannot understand Beaverbrook's actions. His actions are quite appropriate for a person who holds certain views about psychology and morale, and they express such views. It may well have been the case that had Beaverbrook been allowed to run the civil service his own way and the efficiency of the civil service had suffered, we would have been able to say why it suffered. But that is a different point -- a point which, anyway, presupposes that it is possible to understand an action predicated on a mistaken belief and to understand that the belief is mistaken. (If this were not possible, it would perhaps be impossible for anyone ever to learn from their mistakes or from the mistakes of others.) A glance at the history of recent economic policies (e.g., that of the Americans during the depression or that of the British during stagflation) will provide innumerable examples of understanding actions based on faulty beliefs. (And again we attempt to learn from our mistakes.) And consider the actions of the paranoid. He always acts as though the whole world were against him, but we presume that he is mistaken. Indeed, although we understand his actions because we understand his belief about the world, we also attempt to

change his view of the world because we believe that it is erroneous. We could maintain in all of these cases that the actions performed are appropriate for agents holding the beliefs that they do, without ever considering those beliefs from the point of view of truth, i.e., from the point of view of hypotheticality. Moreover, cases in which people act on what we would consider mistaken beliefs are by no means the exception in history, they are the rule. Even cases like that of understanding, say, the actions of Hitler -- which many might claim on the Collingwoodian analysis to be impossible -- become pale in comparison when one realizes that in history one is dealing with agents possessing sometimes radically different world-views from our own. Committed as we must be to our own view of the world, we find these others but a "congeries of errors". Understanding any actions performed by agents possessing radically different world-views from our own, therefore, would be impossible, because we would consider them necessarily as containing errors. Such scepticism, however, is misplaced. We would not expect to find a world-view in the past to be more appealing than our own, nor would it be relevant if we did. All that is important is that we discover what historical agents believed about the world in general and their own situation in particular. Once we understand this, we can understand their actions, because as human individuals ourselves we understand what it means to act according to beliefs, we understand the efficaciousness of belief.

The greater importance of the efficaciousness of belief for historical understanding, which Collingwood noted in An Essay on Metaphysics, is hinted at in parts of The Idea of History. For

example, he says:

> My act of apprehending the equality of the angles is therefore not a revival of [Euclid's] act, but the performance of another act of the same kind; and what I know by performing that act is not that Euclid knew the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle to be equal, but that they are equal.[20]

Perhaps Collingwood includes this example only because it is a case in which he believes that what Euclid "knew" is in fact true. But the example is of greater importance. Whether what the historical agent believed to be the truth was the truth or not, the historian cannot understand the agent's actions unless he puts himself in the position of believing what the agent believed. If he can imagine himself in the position of one who believes the things that the historical agent believed, then he can see why the historical agent acted as he did.

Once the centrality of belief in historical action is realized and the relation of efficaciousness is appreciated, it becomes possible to specify what counts as an explanation of an historical action. Such an explanation will consist in an account of the beliefs and purposes of the agent within the context of his own world-view. Were we to consider the actions of historical agents in the light of our own world-view, perhaps within our own view of what would be reasonable in a situation, we would not be treating of the historical individual at all, but of some non-existent entity torn from its own historical context and transplanted into our own. The essential task of the historian, therefore, is the reconstruction of

the world-view of the historical agent and the reconstruction within that view of the situation in which he found himself. For an understanding of the development of events, it is also necessary to reconstruct a picture of the actual state of affairs and to possess appropriate theories of historical development, psychology, economics and so on. The next question is: how is this reconstruction to be effected.

Collingwood maintains that historical reconstruction is achieved by a priori imagination. At first sight, such a claim seems hardly compatible with the Popper-Collingwood epistemology sketched above. Actually, the epithet 'a priori' used to describe the nature of historical imagination is quite appropriate. All that Collingwood intends by it is a distinction between historical imagination and fantasy. Historical imagination is not a matter of capriciousness or illusion or fancifulness: it is such that "we cannot but imagine what cannot but be there".[21] 'Imagination' is used, because we do not directly perceive the objects of history but must reconstruct them from the evidence. But the a priori imagination is not quite as certain in its pronouncements as its name might indicate. Indeed, Collingwood himself contends that "All history at its actual best is the provisional and tentative answer to a question which remains unanswered", that "All history is . . . an interim report made in the study of its subject down to the present".[22] There is here always the presumption of a world of fact which the historian is attempting to uncover. The reconstruction is a matter of interpreting the individual pieces of evidence and fitting them into a consistent whole; thus, the idea of facts of history remains despite

the necessity in the Popper-Collingwood system of interpretation.

The introduction of the a priori imagination, with its concomitant presumption of a world of fact, is not incompatible with the theory of historiography found in Croce, Collingwood and Popper, which claims that each generation "has its own troubles and problems, and therefore its own interests and its own point of view [and that therefore] each generation has a right to look upon and re-interpret history in its own way".[23] This theory does not amount to a call for anarchism in the writing of history; it is not a claim that any history is as good as any other: all that it stresses is that the problems of each generation will be different and that, therefore, what those generations study, the aspects of history on which they chose to concentrate, will be different. The use of history merely to demonstrate some present theory, to support some present system of values, would employ not the a priori imagination, but imagination akin to fancy. Although there may be "no fixed points" in the reconstruction of historical events, no basic given facts, the historian must always proceed in his reconstruction by "considering whether the picture of the past to which the evidence leads him is a coherent and continuous picture, one which makes sense".[24] If the picture is not coherent and continuous, then new hypotheses that will account for the "data" will have to be introduced. The process of this reconstruction has been dealt with in Chapter 2: it is one in which hypotheses are suggested and these in turn suggest predictions and retrodictions which will either corroborate or falsify the original hypothesis. What is most central to our present concern is the reconstruction of the world-view of the historical agent, the

reconstruction of the world in which he acts, and the reconstruction of the individual psychological traits of the historical agent.

Dilthey's claim, quoted above, that we are first historical beings and only then contemplators of history is actually in error. We are contemplators of history as a necessary condition of being historical agents, it is not possible to be the one without being the other. If the question that critical philosophy of history must answer is 'What are the necessary conditions of historical knowledge?' the answer to that question is identical to the answer to the question 'What are the necessary conditions of human life?' Human life is history; history is human life. From this relationship between life itself and the study of history comes not only the justification of the belief that in history we are able to possess a special kind of understanding but also a reaffirmation of the importance of efficaciousness rather than hypotheticality in the treatment of historical belief -- a reaffirmation which at the same time undercuts the view that those who champion the notion of re-living as the essential component in historical research are committed to some peculiar process of "subjective" empathizing.[25]

As historical agents ourselves, we see that we live in a unified world: this is true not only of the physical world in which we live, but also of the world of values and purposes. All of our actions are expressions of our fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world, of our constellation of presuppositions about what the world is like, what things are of value and what things are right: they all reflect what Dilthey refers to as a fundamental "system of interactions".[26] Our fundamental view of the world finds its most

reliable, most objective, expression in the institutions that we produce, in the kinds of things which we undertake. Our beliefs become objectified through our actions. On the basis of this perception of our own situation, we attempt to discover a similar system of interactions at the basis of the actions of other historical agents -- a living system, a Lebenszusammenhang. As Dilthey observes:

> In every cultural system . . . an order of values arises from the nature of the activity which the system of interactions serves; it is created by the common work for it; objectifications of life, the distillation of human labour, arise in the form of organizations which bring about the achievements in the culture systems -- legal books, philosophic and poetic works.[27]

Therefore, although history consists of individual actions performed by individual historical agents, there is always an underlying system of beliefs, values and purposes. In the primary analysis, the constituent parts of history are unique individual actions and events, but these events are always expressions of life and cannot be understood except in relation to the constellation of presuppositions which gave rise to them, and cannot be studied except as objectifications of those constellations of presuppositions. The attempt of the historian to say what happened, which is at the same time an attempt to say why it happened, involves a logic of the situation, a consideration of any unique event in terms of the entire context in which it occurred. But this logic of the situation is not and cannot be given in some crypto-scientific description, it is given as a description of the situation in terms of some world-view

which that situation reflects and to which the agents involved in that situation are committed. Therefore, although the constituent parts of history are unique individual actions and events,

> [T]he formations and combinations of the unique are not arbitrary. Each of them expresses the lived structural unity of individual and community life. Every report of the facts of a case, however simple, seeks at the same time to make them intelligible in the light of general ideas or concepts of mental activities.[28]

The relationships between individual actions as expressions and thought as that which is expressed by actions and between individual thoughts and the lived structural unity of a world-view give an indication of how the dialectical epistemological method of Popper and Collingwood is to be applied to explanations of historical phenomena. The historian must attempt to interpret each piece of evidence as an objectification of mind, as the trace of some action or set of actions which expressed thoughts of historical agents. Since there is a structural unity behind all actions of any given socio-historical environment, the various remains (for example, the documents, works of art, household wares, remains of buildings, evidence of institutions) must fit into a consistent and coherent pattern exemplifying this structural unity. The historian can, therefore, move from evidence to thought to structural unity. Only when a theory of the society is achieved which provides a structural unity in terms of which each and every piece of evidence can be given an interpretation may the historian cease in his endeavours. But even then he must be wary, because it is always possible that

there is more than one structural unity which can be employed to account for all of the evidence with which the historian is familiar and it is always possible that new evidence may appear which will force him to reassess the structural unity which he has supplied. In the words of Dilthey: "[T]he limit of our understanding always lies at the point where we can no longer reconstruct on the basis of the complex."[29] All that is available to the historian is the evidence: the reconstruction that he achieves, therefore, is always a reconstruction relative to that body of evidence. "[H]istorical thinking," says Collingwood, "means nothing else than interpreting all the available evidence with the maximum degree of critical skill. It does not mean discovering what really happened, if 'what really happened' is anything other than 'what the evidence indfcates'."[30] But, of course, it does mean discovering what really happened -- at least insofar as that expression has any meaning at all. For historical perception is just perception; it is exactly the same kind of perception that we employ in our everyday lives. Understanding our contemporaries involves just the same kind of process of reconstruction as does understanding historical agents and the worlds of those historical agents. The only difference is that in the latter case we do not have the difficult task of reconstructing also the world-view behind the expressions, since it is also our world-view. If historical perception is not possible, then no perception whatsoever is possible.

4.4 Conclusion: The historicist conception of the nature of the historical process, which maintains that man is an historical being and which attempts to draw out the consequences of this view, has led to the adoption of each of the major theories which liberal philosophers such as Popper and Hayek, Strauss and Watkins, have been at pains to refute: it has led to predictionism, holism and to "irrationalism". In the first place, however, it must be observed that these sub-theories of historicism are by no means as menacing as their detractors would contend; and, in the second place, it must be carefully noted what the implications of an acceptance of predictionism, holism and "irrationalism" actually are. In point of fact, in the case of Popper in particular, the consequences of these theories are the consequences of the liberal approach itself. The necessity of predictionism is a necessity both of human life and of the epistemological structure to which Popper himself adheres. The possibility of a speculative philosophy of history is also to be seen as a consequence of the same epistemological structure, since no history is possible without some concomitent idea of the general nature of the historical process. Speculative philosophy of history may be as vague or as detailed and as comprehensive as it likes, but some speculative philosophy of history is essential. Speculative philosophy of history may be futile, but it is only as futile as any knowledge of history, of which it is a necessary corollary. This rehabilitation of speculative philosophy of history should not, of course, be taken as an encouragement to historians to speculate or to predict: it is not a claim that historical forecast will be successful. That is, surely, an empirical matter. It may turn out

that Popper is correct in his contention that completeness and closure are, at least in practice, impossible. All that is maintained here is that there is no bar against attempts at prediction in principle. And this because predictionism is a consequence of speculative philosophy of history, and historians must be doing some speculative philosophy of history if they are doing history at all.

The spectre of holism, with its threat of depriving the human individual of his freedom, of replacing him as the sole genuine historical agent, turns out to be no threat at all, but to be a necessary way of viewing the historical individual. Man is not robbed of his individuality by being seen as a concrete individual, as a member of some community of interpretation; rather, it is only in terms of his being a member of such a community that he may have any individuality whatsoever. All individuals must live in some world, in some social world; only within such a world can they act at all. But this conceptual point about individuals must not be confused either with an empirical question or with a moral question. The individualist-holist dilemma has all to often been characterized as a dispute over whether specific human individuals can control or influence large groups, whether the unintended effects of human actions outweigh the intended effects. These are usually empirical questions: sometimes the answer will be that a person can control or influence the group, sometimes it will be that he cannot. With respect to such questions, the conceptual doctrine of the concrete universal is neutral. Nor does the doctrine say or imply anything about the moral question of whether governments should place the good of the society as a whole, whatever that may mean, over the

good of any particular individuals within the society. The traditional association (or confusion) of the conceptual problem with the empirical and/or moral problems is totally without foundation.

The belief that holism and predictionism both imply the denial of the freedom of the individual can be seen as a reflection of an illegitimate abstraction. The interpretative element of perception which places the particular under a general or universal concept is abstracted and posited as a regulator of the particular. This is most clearly seen in the case of general laws, where the law appears as the determinant of the particular instances. In actual fact, however, the universal and the particular cannot be separated, they represent two essential elements of all perception. Even if a set of people are seen as members of a class and a general law can be constructed regarding the actions of members of the class under a given set of circumstances, this would not mean that the action of those people was determined in any sense detrimental to the notion of the freedom of the will. The general law itself is no more than a reflection of the way in which the people do in fact act.

Human individuals are seen as members of communities of interpretation who, as such, are brought up within a socially interpreted world, with the values and truths of that world. The individuals act within that world and on that world, even to the extent of radically altering it. It may be possible, as in the dialectic of thought, to construct a schema of the progress of ideas within the community, but this does not mean that that progress was not the result of the individual effort of the particular people involved. Traditional individualism and traditional holism make the mistake

of reifying the results of the false abstraction, the first as the totally autonomous particular person and the second as the equally autonomous social whole. In point of fact, neither of these two has any real existence: all that really exists is individual people who are members of given communities of interpretation and interest. This is not, of course, to deny all of the claims of holism, it is rather to see historical individuals in their proper perspective as both particular people and members of groups.

The charge against historicism on the grounds of some supposed irrationalism proves as misguided as the other two charges. The historicist is committed to the belief that there are no absolute, transhistorical values or transhistorical truths of science. But this does not throw man into anarchism or scepticism, it makes him totally responsible for his own world. As an historical individual, man must interpret and give meaning to the world in which he lives: the "irrationalism" of historicism simply recognizes this and carries it to its logical conclusion. The objection that the impossibility of deciding between rival world-views is tantamount to irrationalism, in some sense of that term that is detrimental to human dignity, rests on the mistaken belief that it is possible to make sense of some world of fact, some world in itself that reveals itself to us, independent of all world-views. Such a belief is yet another reflection of the inappropriate abstraction of the sensation and interpretative elements of perception.

The positions of predictionism, holism and "irrationalism", therefore, can all be seen to be the results of the doctrine of the concrete universal and the epistemological position of which it is

a part. It is the necessity of an interpretation of the nature of the historical process that results in the necessity of speculative philosophy of history and, thereby, allows for the theoretical possibility of predictionism. It is the need to see man in his social perspective, to see him in his true historical situation, that generates a form of holism. It is the realization that man, as an historical being, must himself engage in the interpretative activity that leads to the rejection of transhistorical values and truths. The logic of history is through and through the logic of the concrete universal. The problem is that in each of the positions runs the possibility of reifying and separating off one or the other of the "elements" of the concrete universal or of perception. What must be remembered is that neither "element" can be legitimately reified: the individual is the conceptual union of particular and universal, not a particular ruled over by a universal, and perception is always of individuals and individual things, where again this separation is illegitimate. Thus, the essential consideration is what it means to be an individual, and in particular a human, historical individual, and what is involved in the perception of an individual.

One of the greatest anomalies of this is that Popper and Hayek, who have proven the foremost opponents of historicism, should be two of the foremost proponents of the epistemological principles that underlie historicism . . . and that they should be so because they, too, are proponents of individualism.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One: HISTORICISM AND ANTI-HISTORICISM

1.1 Historicism and Its Enemies

1. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of Eternal Return, trans., W. R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 141.

2. Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, "The Meaning of Historicism," American Historical Review, 69 (1953-54), 568-577.

3. Calvin G. Rand, "Two Meanings of Historicism in the Writings of Dilthey, Troeltsch and Meinecke," Journal of the History of Ideas, 25 (1964), 503-518.

4. Lord Acton, "German Schools of History," Historical Essays and Studies (London: Macmillan, 1907), p. 345. Popper has also attributed the earliest discovery of historicity to Heracleitus who also "lived in an age of social revolution". See Sir Karl R. Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), I, 12.

5. Raymond Aron, Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire: Essai sur les limites de l'objectivité historique (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 293. It is Aron's contention that the advent of historicism is due to the loss of prestige and authority suffered by "les deux valeurs sur lesquelles se fondait la confiance du XIX^{e} siècle, la science positive et la démocratie, c'est-à-dire au fond le rationalisme."

6. José Ortega y Gasset, Man and People, trans., W. R. Trask (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 42.

7. Rudolf Bultmann, History and Escatology: The Presence of Eternity, The Gifford Lectures, 1955 (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 2.

8. Meinecke contends that the earliest use of 'historism' was in a work on Vico by Werner. In the very next instance of its use, in Carl Menger's Die Irrtümer des Historismus in der deutschen National-ökonomie (1884), it had become a term of abuse. See Friedrich Meinecke, Historism: The Rise of a New Historical Outlook, trans.,

J. E. Anderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), liv.

9. Sir Karl R. Popper, The Poverty of Historicism (1944-45; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 3. This definition is repeated in The Open Society and Its Enemies and in "Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences," Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). "The naive view," contends Hayek, "which regards the complexes which history studies as given wholes naturally leads to the belief that their observation can reveal 'laws' of the development of these wholes. This belief is one of the most characteristic features of that scientistic history which under the name of historicism was trying to find an empirical basis for a theory of history . . . and to establish necessary successions of definite 'stages' or 'phases', 'systems' or 'styles', following each other in historical development." Friedrich A. Hayek, The Counter-Revolution in Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1955), p. 73.

10. Benedetto Croce, History as the Story of Liberty, trans., Sylvia Sprigge (Chicago: Gateway, 1970), p. 35. In a similar vein, writing on Buckle's philosophy of history, Lord Acton comments: "[T]he well-known novelist Gutzkow was in prison, and not having books at hand to help him in writing a novel, beguiled the time by writing and publishing a philosophy of history." Lord Acton, "Mr Buckle's Philosophy of History," Essays in the Liberal Interpretation of History, ed. and introd., W. H. McNeill (University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 27.

11. W. H. Walsh, An Introduction to Philosophy of History, rev. ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1958), p.14. Croce links the two schools even more closely: "The so-called 'philosophers of nature'," he writes, "are similarly allegorical and badly allegorical; they flourished at the same time as the philosophers of history and enjoyed the same fate." (Liberty, p. 144.) This tenor of philosophy of history and its similarity to philosophy of nature leads Walsh to observe that: "A writer on philosophy of history, in Great Britain at least, must begin by justifying the very existence of his subject." And he contends that it is only when "the native genius of British thinkers, with its combination of caution and critical aucumen . . . in propounding and solving problems of philosophical analysis" is applied to genuine problems in this field -- once, that is, philosophy of history has been demetaphysicalized -- that philosophy of history can be considered a legitimate pursuit. (Introduction, p. 9.)

12. Benedetto Croce, History: Its Theory and Practice, trans., Douglas Ainslie (New York: Russell & Russell, 1960), p. 58.

13. Poverty, p. 17.

14. ibid., p. 19.

15. The first work to bear the title Philosophy of History was the 1765 reprint of the introductory chapters of Voltaire's Essai sur les

moeurs et l'esprit des nations, ed. and introd., R. Pomeau, Paris, 1963. Although the principle aim of the Essai -- and of its sequel, Le siècle de Louis XIV -- was according to its author simply to raise history above the level of old-wives' tales and superstition-ridden fables, to establish it as a critical enquiry into the events of the past, his comments to one disenchanted with traditional histories does introduce the idea of sequence common to many speculative philosophies of history. "Vous voudriez," he writes, "que des philosophes eussent écrit l'histoire ancienne, parce que vous voulez la lire en philosophe. Vous ne cherchez que des verités utiles, et vous n'avez guère trouvé, dites-vous, que d'inutiles erreurs . . . [E]ssayons de deterrer quelques monuments précieux sous les ruines des siècles." (op. cit., I, 3.) Voltaire's criteria for deciding which are the "precious monuments" are totally dependent upon his theory of the four major periods of history. Although the various stages which he discusses appear to be isolated one from another, there is still the idea of history as a sublime progression, a progression from imperfect to perfect. The idea of stages in the development of societies is found also in Vico's Principj di Scienza Nuova (1725; Milan, 1953). Vico's work exhibits a feature common to many speculative philosophies of history, it draws an analogy between the microcosm of man and the macrocosm of society. For Vico all societies develop through an age of Gods, an age of heros and an age of men. More popular is the analogy with seasons or with times of life, as found in Spengler. It is primarily the analogies which suggest the possibility of laws of continual progress between successive periods of history which can be found, i.a., in Hegel and Marx.

16. Open Society, I, 7.

17. ibid., p. 157.

18. Quoted in Popper, Poverty, p. 51-

19. loc. cit.

20. Open Society, I, vii-viii.

21. Popper, Poverty, pp. 3-4.

22. op. cit., p. 32.

23. ibid., p. 29.

24. ibid., p. 32. Common abuse and ad hominem arguments, apparently, are not enough for Popper: he even sees some insidious conspiracy afoot to undermine civilization.

25. Ben B. Seligman, Main Currents in Modern Economics: Economic Thought Since 1870 (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 21.

26. Hayek does point out that there are two varieties of historicism. The first is that attributed to the German Historical School; but this

is completely separated from the second, which is the scientistic invention of economists and legalists responsible for the stunted growth of the social sciences, etc. Popper fails altogether to discuss the first group. In a similar vein, Aron distinguishes between the critical philosophers of history and the historicists. See Raymond Aron, La Philosophie critique de l'histoire: Essai sur une théorie allemande de l'histoire, 3rd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1964), pp. 289 ff.

27. Hayden V. White, "On History and Historicisms," From History to Sociology: The Transition in German Historical Thinking, by Carlo Antoni (University of Detroit Press, 1960).

28. Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 2. Cf. F. A. Hayek, The Constitution of Liberty (University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 235 ff.

29. Strauss, loc. cit.

30. Geoffrey Barraclough, "The Historian in a Changing World," Hans Meyerhoff, ed., The Philosophy of History in Our Time: An Anthology (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 30-31.

31. Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 3.

32. loc. cit.

33. Popper, Open Society, I, 64.

34. ibid., p. 61.

35. ibid., p. 72.

36. vide infra

37. Barraclough, "The Historian in a Changing World," p. 31.

38. Popper, Poverty, p. 17.

39. loc. cit. Cf. Open Society, II, 208.

40. Open Society, II, 202.

41. ibid., p. 208.

42. ibid., p. 213.

43. ibid., p. 212.

44. Benedetto Croce, "In Praise of Individuality and Against 'Universal History' and Fake Universals in General," Philosophy, Poetry, History: An Anthology of Essays, ed. and trans., Cecil Sprigge (Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 522. Cf. Croce, History, p. 62.

1.2 Historicism and Neo-Historicism

1. Giovanni Gentile, Introduzione alla filosofia, Opere (Firenza, 1952), XXXVI, 259.

2. Hans Meyerhoff, "The Heritage of Historicism," Philosophy of History in Our Time, Chapter 1.

3. Cf. Helen P. Liebel, "Philosophical Idealism in the Historische Zeitschrift, 1859-1914," History and Theory, 3 (1964).

4. Popper, Open Society, II, 76, 81.

5. Manlio Ciardo, Quattro epoche dello storicismo (Bari, 1947).

6. Pietro Rossi, Lo storicismo tedesco contemporaneo (Torino: Einaudi, 1971), pp. 365-413.

7. Nicola Abbagnano, "Lo Storicismo," Storia della filosofia (Torino, 1969), III, Chapter VII.

8. loc. cit.

9. Cf. Aron, Introduction, p. 17; and Maurice Mandelbaum, "Some Neglected Philosophic Problems Regarding History," Journal of Philosophy, 49 (1952), p. 137.

10. Cf. R. G. Collingwood, "The Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History," Essays in the Philosophy of History, ed. and introd., W. Debbins (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 44.

11. W. B. White, "Everyman His Own Historicist," Perspectives and Patterns: Discourses on History (University of Syracuse Press, 1962), pp. 1-24.

12. For a discussion of this claim, vide: Paul Langham, Explanation and Understanding in the Human Sciences (M.A. Thesis: University of Wales, 1969). It is argued that, although the understanding that is possible in the human sciences is of a different kind from that which is possible in the natural sciences, the structure of explanation in both kinds of sciences is the same.

13. Croce, Liberty, pp. 43, 257, 315.

14. Croce, "The Historicism of Hegel and the New Historicism," Philosophy, Poetry, History, p. 613. Cf. "Philosophy as Absolute Historicism," loc. cit., pp. 13-31.

15. ibid., p. 614.

16. Croce, "Concerning My Philosophical Work," Philosophy, Poetry, History, p. 6.

17. Lee and Beck, "The Meaning of Historicism," p. 577.

18. Meyerhoff, "The Philosophy of History in Our Time," pp. 299-300.

19. Hayek, The Counter-Revolution, p. 191.

20. Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, Search For a Method, trans., Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Press, 1968), pp. 3-8.

21. vide infra, section 3.2.

22. James K. Feibleman, "Historicism," D. D. Runes, ed., Dictionary of Philosophy (New Jersey, 1968), p. 127.

23. Maurice Mandelbaum, "Historicism," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy

(New York, 1967), IV, 22-25. See also: Maurice Mandelbaum, History, Man, and Reason: A Study of Nineteenth Century Thought (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

24. loc. cit.

25. Meinecke, Historism, lv.

26. ibid., lvi.

27. Cf. José Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, trans., James Cleugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), pp. 30-31.

28. Croce, Liberty, p. 65.

29. ibid., p. 151.

30. José Ortega y Gasset, "History as a System," History as a System and Other Essays Towards a Philosophy of History, trans., Helene Weyl (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 217.

31. Cf. Croce, "Philosophy as Absolute Historicism" and "The Historicism of Hegel and the New Historicism".

32. Wilhelm Dilthey, Meaning in History: W. Dilthey's Thoughts on History and Society, ed. and introd., H. P. Rickman (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p. 66. Cf. Vico's famous remark that: "Whoever reflects on this cannot but marvel that the philosophers should have bent all their energies to the study of the world of nature, which, since God made it, He alone knows; and that they should have neglected the study of the world of nations, or civil world, which, since men made it, man could come to know". Giambattista Vico, Principj di Scienza Nuova (1725; Milan, 1953), para. 331. And Benedetto Croce, La filosofia di Giambattista Vico (Bari, 1911), pp. 6-9.

33. Hayek, The Counter-Revolution,

34. Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Dream," Meyerhoff, ed., "The Philosophy of History in Our Time," p. 41.

35. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 35.

Chapter Two: A CRITIQUE OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

2.1 On Knowing What Will Happen in the Future

1. Cf. Herman Tennessen, "Which World is the Real One and How Would We Know?" Humanistic Psychology, XII (Spring, 1973), 33-48.

2. Popper, Poverty, p. 30.

3. ibid., pp. 27-8.

4. Popper, Open Society, I, 31.

5. ibid., p. 33. Cf. Poverty, pp. 31-2.

6. Open Society, I, 33.

7. Poverty, p. 32. For an analysis of knowledge which bears a superficial similarity to Popper's characterization, see Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1915; New York: Free Press, 1965), pp. 17-18. Durkheim's subsequent comments on epistemology, however, make it clear that he, too, shares much in common with the Popper-Collingwood line.

8. R. G. Collingwood, "Ruskin's Philosophy," Essays in the Philosophy of Art, ed., Alan Donagan (Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 12.

9. Cf. Collingwood, "Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge?" Essays in the Philosophy of History, pp. 29-30.

10. Cf. Karl R. Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery (New York: Basic Books, 1959), Chapter III; Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," Patrick Gardiner, ed., Theories of History (New York: Free Press, 1959), pp. 344-5.

11. Three possible interpretations suggest themselves: (1) That although the sentence is in terms of P knowing what will happen in the future, it is really about what P knows will probably happen in the future. This analysis will find favour among certain positivist misinterpreters of Hume. But if probability is a matter of statistical frequency, knowing that something is probably going to happen in the future is no less problematic than knowing that it will happen. (2) That the sentence should be re-interpreted as a report on a psychological state of P, rather than as a statement about X occurring. This has the advantage of rendering the sentence empirically testable, but it is plainly erroneous. (3) That the sentence should not be interpreted as a statement but as an expression of commitment or emphaticness -- as in Wittgenstein's analysis of 'I am in pain'. But this would still require that the original knowledge claim be meaningful.

12. Edouard Perroy, The Hundred Years War (New York: Capricorn, 1965), p. 150.

13. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 21. "History has room for prophecy and more than this," maintains Ortega, "the labour of history is only scientific in proportion to the place that prophecy can play in it" (ibid., p. 22).

2.2 Some Arguments Against Predictionism

1. R. G. Collingwood, "Oswald Spengler and the Theory of Historical Cycles," Essays in the Philosophy of History, pp. 57-75.

2. ibid., pp. 68-69.

3. Cf. Popper, Poverty, p. 13; Open Society, I, 22.

4. "Oswald Spengler," p. 69.

5. ibid., p. 67.

6. Collingwood, "The Philosophy of History," Essays in the Philosophy of History, p. 132.

7. op. cit., p. 41.

8. Collingwood, "Are Science and History Different Kinds of Knowledge?" pp. 30-31. Cf. Benedetto Croce, Aesthetics: As Science of Expression and General Linguistic, trans., Douglas Ainslie (New York: Noonday Press, pp. 26-8, passim.

9. Cf. Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, abrid., D. C. Somervell (Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 45-6; Carl L. Becker, "What Are Historical Facts?" Meyerhoff, ed., Philosophy of History in Our Time, pp. 122-3.

10. Cf. Toynbee, A Study of History, p. 45.

11. Kitson Clark's example of the gingerbread salesman seems to be of this kind. Vide: E. H. Carr, What is History? The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures, 1961 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p. 12.

12. Compare also H. T. Buckle, "History and the Operation of Universal Laws," Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, pp. 114-6.

13. "Oswald Spengler," p. 68.

14. Cf. Collingwood, "Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge?" pp. 22-33.

15. According to the D-N model of explanation, a prediction is made on the basis of a set of statements of initial conditions and of general laws. It is possible, at least on this model, to add initial conditions to the original set and thereby to generate a different prediction. A prediction may, therefore, be disjunctive in form, saying that if initial conditions I_1, I_2, . . ., I_n obtain then E_1 will occur, but if initial conditions I_1, I_2, . . ., I_{n+1} obtain, then E_2 will occur. I_{n+1} may be taken to represent some statement to the effect that P performs some action intended to forestall E_1. The prediction will be that either E_1 or E_2 will occur depending upon whether I_{n+1} occurs. But to say that we cannot know, in principle, whether I_{n+1} will occur is, as we shall show, to beg the question.

16. This may bring Collingwood into line with Popper's contention that scientists do not predict either, except in unusual cases. Cf. Open Society, I, 260.

17. Collingwood, "A Philosophy of Progress," Essays in the Philosophy of History, p. 113.

18. Cf. R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (1946; Oxford University Press, 1956), Part V.

19. op. cit., pp. 278-9. Cf. Poverty, pp. 42-3.

20. ibid., 281.

21. ibid., p. 279.

22. loc. cit.

23. Hayek, The Counter-Revolution, p. 42.

24. Pro-naturalist historicists are those who believe that the methods of the natural sciences are applicable to the human sciences. Vide: Popper, Poverty, pp. 35 ff.

25. Poverty, p. 115.

26. ibid., p. 116.

27. ibid., p. 126.

28. loc. cit.

29. op. cit., v.

30. Or rather, it would have been surprising had no one ever thought of it before. In the conclusion of The Idea of Nature, in which he stresses the necessity of treating scientific facts as a sub-class of historical facts, Collingwood comments: "Hegel, nailing to the counter in advance the lie that he regarded his own philosophy as final, wrote at the end of his treatise on the philosophy of history, 'Bis hierher ist das Bewusstseyn gekommen, 'That is as far as science has reached'. All that has been said is a mere interim report on the history of the idea of nature down to the present time. If I knew what further progress would be made in the future, I should already have made that progress." R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature (1945; Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 172-3. If Popper had no opportunity to read Collingwood, Croce was available; and if not Croce, then surely Hegel.

2.3 On Knowing What Happened in the Past

1. Although in almost every Indo-European language the same term is employed to designate both the historical process and reports, etc., about that process -- e.g., 'history', 'hanes', 'histoire', 'storia', 'historia', 'Geschichte' -- this distinction has long been a commonplace. Vide: G. W. F. Hegel, Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History, trans. and introd., Robert S. Hartman (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), p. 75. Actually, the usual distinction is scarcely sufficient: at least five meanings of the term are in current usage. (1) The inclusive sense of 'history', which deems history to be the totality of events that have happened in the past; (2) The exclusive sense, which considers that only certain events that have occurred in the past comprise history proper, viz., those that are historic. In this sense, it is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of something being history that it occurred in the past. (3) The continuum sense, which treats every event in the entire stream of human existence as history, irrespective of its temporal relation to any particular present. (4) The historiographical sense, which refers not to happenings at all, but to accounts and records, conjectures and theories about what occurred in the past. (5) The activity or discipline sense, where history is that activity or discipline concerned with enquiring into what occurred in the past.

2. Croce, History: Its Theory and Practice, p. 12.

3. Collingwood, "The Philosophy of History," p. 138.

4. Collingwood, "The Limits of Historical Knowledge," Essays in the Philosophy of History, p. 99.

5. Popper, Open Society, II, 268. The position of Croce, Collingwood and Popper is obviously somewhat different and somewhat more sophisticated than that expounded by Carl Becker. "Mind [says Becker], I say [what is the historical event] not was. I take it for granted that, if we are interested in, let us say, the fact of the Magna Carta, we are interested in it for our own sake and not for its sake; and, since we are living now and not in 1215, we must be interested in the Magna Carta, if at all, for what it is now and not for what it was." Carl L. Becker, "What Are Historical Facts?" p. 121. The questions 'What is an historical fact?' and 'When is an historical fact?' and 'Where is an historical fact?' lead Becker to the somewhat bizarre conclusion that, since the verb is in the present tense, historical facts are all present. This conclusion is given the bare semblance of meaningfulness by the distinction between the signing of the Magna Carta and something called 'the fact of the signing of the Magna Carta'. What this latter entity is Becker never informs us. His entire thesis seems to rest on the confusion between present continuous tense sentences of an existential nature and questions of a universal nature. 'What is an historical?' is not an existential question, it is a universal interrogative.

6. Marrou, De la connaissance historique, p. 39. This is a much stronger suggestion than that made by H. W. Carr to the effect that, although the use of 'history' is ambivalent, it never leads to any ambiguities and that, therefore, a technical term for history as written is not necessary. Vide: H. W. Carr, The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce: The Problem of Art and History (1917; New York, 1969), p. 189.

7. op. cit., p. 46.

8. loc. cit.

9. ibid., p. 47.

10. op. cit., II, 261.

11. "Science: Conjectures and Refutations," p. 47.

12. ibid., p. 44.

13. loc. cit.

14. ibid., p. 45.

15. ibid., p. 46.

16. Collingwood, "Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", p. 49.

17. ibid., p. 50.

18. loc. cit.

19. Cf. Footnote 2.2, no. 9, above.

20. Collingwood, "The Limits of Historical Knowledge", p. 99.

21. Croce, History: Its Theory and Practice, p. 18.

22. Popper, Open Society, II, 267.

23. loc. cit.

24. Cf., i.a., Christopher Blake, "Can History Be Objective?" Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, pp. 329-343.

25. "Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", p. 35. Collingwood contends, naturally, that: "Historical thought . . . is an attitude which assumes that there exists a world of facts . . . independent of the being known, and that it is possible, if not wholly to discover these facts, at any rate to discover them in part and approximately" (ibid., p. 44). A similar claim can be made of the perception of present facts.

26. Cf. William H. Dray, "'Explaining What' in History", Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, pp. 403-8; L. B. Cebik, "Colligation and the Writing of History," Monist, 53 (1969).

27. "Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", p. 36.

28. "Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge?" p. 29.

29. "Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", p. 36.

30. This points to the intimate relationship between life and history and to the meaning of the claim that only because we are ourselves historical agents are we able to understand history.

31. ibid., p. 38.

32. Alan Bullock, "The Historian's Purpose: History and Metahistory," Meyerhoff, ed., The Philosophy of History in Our Time, p. 296.

33. "Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", p. 38.

34. ibid., p. 39.

35. C. G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History", p. 345.

36. ibid., p. 348.

37. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 23.

38. W. B. Gallie, "Explanations in History and the Genetic Sciences," Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, p. 387.

39. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 24.

40. Bullock, "The Historian's Purpose", p. 295.

41. R. G. Collingwood, Roman Britain, rev. ed. (Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 25-6.

42. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 23.

43. Popper, Open Society, II, 264.

44. loc. cit.

45. ibid., p. 266.

Chapter Three: INDIVIDUALISM versus HOLISM: A METHODOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL DILEMMA

3.1 The Individualist Argument

1. G. M. Trevelyan, England Under The Stuarts (1905; Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1960); C. V. Wedgwood, The Thirty Years War (1938; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

2. Ortega, Man and People, p. 174.

3. A. J. P. Taylor, The Trouble Makers: Dissent Over Foreign Policy 1792-1939 (1957; London: Panther, 1969), pp. 11-12.

4. J. W. N. Watkins, "Historical Individuals in the Social Sciences," Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, p. 505.

5. loc. cit.

6. ibid., p. 506.

7. Marrou, De la connaissance historique, pp. 176-7.

8. May Brodbeck, "Methodological Individualism: Definition and Reduction," W. H. Dray, ed., Philosophical Analysis and History (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 300-1.

9. A. C. Danto, "The Historical Individual," Dray, ed., Philosophical Analysis and History, p. 268.

10. ibid., p. 276.

11. Brodbeck does not share this view: "The empiricist commitment to definitional methodological individualism," she maintains, "does not logically imply a commitment to explanatory methodological individualism, that is, to reduction. In the context of explanation, methodological individualism is a matter of principle . . . It is logically possible that irrespective of definitional reduction, we may have perfect knowledge of society in the sense of having a process theory whose laws contain only macroscopic or group variables" ("Methodological Individualism", pp. 326-7). Brodbeck's conception of perfect knowledge is of a closed and complete system. Such a system may be given in terms of process theories, but those theories must be based on verifiable statements referring to human individuals. If they are not, they will be cognitively meaningless, since sentences referring to social individuals are not directly or indirectly verifiable (ex hypothesi). It is, therefore, in principle, impossible to practise non-reductionism even in the sphere of explanation either.

12. ibid., p. 275.

13. Ernest Gellner, "Holism versus Individualism in History and Sociology," Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, p. 491.

14. A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), pp. 64-5.

15. Vide: Brodbeck, "Methodological Individualism", p. 302.

16. ibid., p. 304.

3.2 The Reduction of the Psychological

1. Watkins, "Historical Individuals in the Social Sciences," p. 508.

2. ibid., p. 509.

3. Karl Marx, German Ideology, Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, ed., T. B. Bottomore & M. Rubel (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 69.

3.3 In Defence of Methodological Holism

1. Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny (London: Odhams Press, 1964), p. 696.

2. Maurice Mandelbaum, "Societal Facts," John O'Neill, ed., Modes of Individualism and Collectivism (Heinemann, 1973), pp. 224-5; Ortega, Man and People, pp. 171 ff.

3. Popper's situational analysis may not be identical to the theory of the logic of the situation attributed to Tolstoi, but it seems still to be open to just the objections that Popper gives to holism.

3.4 Transcending Individualism and Holism

1. Vide: May Brodbeck, "On the Philosophy of the Social Sciences," O'Neill, ed., Modes of Individualism and Collectivism, p. 92.

2. Mandelbaum, "Societal Facts", p. 223.

3. ibid., p. 225.

4. ibid., p. 231.

5. Hayek, The Counter-Revolution, p. 54.

6. loc. cit.

7. ibid., p. 55.

8. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 15.

9. ibid., p. 19.

10. Croce, Liberty, p. 301.

11. Collingwood, Speculum Mentis, p. 221. Croce claims that historicism consists purely and simply of the doctrine of the concrete universal. "Historicism," he says, "is a logical principle; it is, in fact, the very category of logic; it is logicality in its full acceptation, the logicality of the concrete universal" (Liberty, p. 78)

12. Mandelbaum, "Societal Facts", p. 231.

13. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, trans., G. D. H. Cole (London: Dent, 1961), p. 13.

14. ibid., p. 15.

15. ibid., p. 12.

16. Hegel, Reason in History, p. 90.

17. ibid., p. 79; cf. p. 53.

18. ibid., pp. 66 and 45.

19. G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of Right, trans., T. M. Knox (Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 122-3.

20. Ortega, Man and People, p. 192. Cf. Ortega, The Origin of Philosophy, trans., T. Talbot (New York: Norton, 1967), pp. 73-4; and The Modern Theme, p. 14. "To [the spirit of One people]," says Hegel, "the individuals belong; each is the son of his people and, at the same time, insofar as his state is in development, the son of his age. No one remains behind it, no one can leap ahead of it" (ibid., p. 66). And Dilthey comments: "In this objective mind the past is a permanently enduring present for us. Its realm extends from the style of life and the forms of social intercourse, to the system of purposes which the society has created for itself, to custom, law, state, religion, art, science and philosophy. For even the work of genius represents ideas, feelings and ideals commonly held in an age and environment" (Meaning in History, p. 120).

21. Cf. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto

22. Vide: William H. Dray, "The Historical Explanation of Actions Reconsidered," Sydney Hook, ed., Philosophy and History (New York, 1963).

23. Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, ed., T. B. Bottomore & M. Rubel (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 76.

24. Karl Marx, Die Heilige Familie, Selected Writings, p. 78.

25. Cf. Collingwood, "Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge?" pp. 23-4.

26. Collingwood suggests that Plato did resolve the problem, that Plato anticipated the doctrine of the concrete universal. "What Parmenides has shown," he maintains, "is not that the theory of forms is untenable but that when you try to state such a theory in terms of immanence you are implying transcendence, and when you try to state it in terms of transcendence you are implying immanence" (The Idea of Nature, p. 64). This seems, however, to be a case of a philosopher in search of a precursor. There is little in Plato's work that suggests a definite solution — only a problem.

27. Collingwood, Speculum Mentis, p. 222.

28. Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, Selected Writings, p. 83.

29. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Selected Writings, pp. 91-2.

30. Jean-Paul Sartre, La Mort dans l'âme (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), p. 51.

31. Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, p. 83.

Chapter Four: RATIONALISM AND PRESUPPOSITIONS IN HISTORY

4.1 Popperian Rationalism and Historicist Irrationalism

1. Popper, Open Society, II, 224.
2. loc. cit.
3. loc. cit.
4. ibid., p. 226.
5. ibid., p. 225.
6. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 34.
7. Open Society, II, 226.
8. Vide: section 2.2, above.
9. Cf. Marx, German Ideology, p. 90.
10. Croce, Liberty, p. 239.
11. Open Society, II, 225.
12. ibid., p. 219.
13. ibid., p. 225.
14. ibid., p. 226.
15. Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 25.
16. Open Society, II, 256.
17. Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 29.
18. ibid., p. 35.
19. Open Society, II, 230.
20. R. G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics (Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 21. Although Ortega does not speak in terms of presuppositions, he also observes the dependence of what is stated on a background of what is left unsaid. "No saying of itself," he claims, "says all it wants to say. It says a small fraction, and the rest is implied and taken for granted as a matter of course." Ortega, "Prologue to History," Concord and Liberty, trans., Helene Weyl (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 98.
21. Metaphysics, p. 25.
22. loc. cit.
23. Cf. J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances," Philosophical Papers, ed., J. O. Urmson & G. J. Warnock (Oxford University Press, 1970).
24. Metaphysics, p. 27.
25. loc. cit.

26. ibid., p. 28.

27. ibid., p. 31.

28. ibid., p. 30.

29. Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, ed., G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (Harper & Row, 1972), p. 2.

30. Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief, ed., Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp. 53 ff; and Ortega, Man and People, p. 263.

31. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, p. 2.

32. Cf. Ortega, "History as a System", p. 174.

33. Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 110.

34. Ortega, "Towards a Philosophy of History", p. 167.

35. In An Essay on Metaphysics, Collingwood demonstrates how the change in the status from empirical proposition to absolute presupposition and then to relative presupposition has occurred with respect to the statement 'Every event has a cause'. Collingwood's Idea of History and Idea of Nature are both exercises in applied presuppositional analysis.

36. Ortega, "History as a System", p. 175.

37. ibid., p. 210.

38. Ortega maintains that it is a sign of the waning vivificatory power (efficaciousness) when a basic belief becomes propositionalized. Vide: "Ideas y Creencias," Obras Completas, 7th ed. (Madrid, 1970), V.

39. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, p. 22.

40. loc. cit.

41. op. cit., p. 186.

42. Cf. Albert Einstein, "Geometry and Experience," Feigl and Brodbeck, eds., Readings in the Philosophy of Science, pp. 189-194; and "The Fundamental Methods of Theoretical Physics," loc. cit., pp. 253-261.

43. Popper, Open Society, II, 261.

44. ibid., p. 260.

45. This confusion of interpretation with selection is exemplified in the writing of E. H. Carr and Marrou. These authors suggest an analogy between historical facts and membership of a select club. "Let us look," suggests Carr, "at the process by which a mere fact about the past is transformed into a fact of history. At Stalybridge Wake in 1850, a vendor of gingerbread, as the result of some petty dispute, was deliberately kicked to death by an angry mob. Is this a fact of history? A year ago I should unhesitatingly have said 'no'" (What is History? p. 12). But then, we are informed, something happened which may lead to a change of mind. "A year ago Dr Kitson Clark cited it in his Ford lectures in Oxford. Does this make it a historical fact? Not, I think, yet. Its present status, I suggest,

is that it has been proposed for membership of the select club of historical facts. It awaits a seconder and sponsors." Carr points out that it may fail to get these, that its application may be refused. Less blatant, though no less suggestive, is the statement of Marrou: "Dans l'une des charmantes petites villas du front de la mer que les fouilles récentes ont mises au jour dans la cité enfouie d'Herculanum, on lit, légèrement gravé à la pointe sur le mur des latrines, le texte suivant: Apollinaris, medicus Titi imp[eratoris], hic cacauit bene. Nul, j'imagine, n'ira qualifier l'événement mentionné d'"historique', car le rôle officiel joué par ce personnage, Apollinaire, médicin de l'empereur Titus, n'a pas été tel que le fonctionnement de son système digestif mérite de retenir l'attention . . . Est historique le fait que l'historien juge digne d'être retenu comme tel"(H.-I. Marrou, "Comment comprendre le métier d'historien," C. Samaran, ed., L'Histoire et ses méthodes, Bruges, 1961, p. 1496. This selection process of historical facts has no bearing on the construction of historical facts, it merely expresses the difference between the inclusive and the exclusive sense of 'history'. The selection does not construct historical facts from things-in-themselves, it simply turns one set of historical facts into historiographical facts. Cf. Footnote 2.3, no. 1, above.

46. Ortega, "History as a System", p. 217.

4.2 Progress and the Dialectic of Thought

1. Collingwood, Speculum Mentis, p. 56.

2. Ortega, The Origins of Philosophy, pp. 29 and 26.

3. Mandelbaum, History, Man, and Reason, p. 44.

4. George Sarton, "The Quest for Truth," W. K. Ferguson, The Renaissance: Six Essays (New York, 1962).

5. T. S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolution (University of Chicago Press, 1970); Paul K. Feyerabend, "How to be a Good Empiricist: A Plea for Tolerance in Matters Epistemological," Baumrin, ed., Philosophy of Science; Herman Tennessen, "Which World is the Real One and How Would we Know?"

6. David Levin, History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley and Parkman (New York, 1963), pp. 24-5.

7. J. H. Plumb, The First Four Georges (London: Fontana, 1966), p. 17.

8. Collingwood, "A Philosophy of Progress", p. 114.

9. ibid., p. 109.

10. Ortega, "History as a System", p. 210.

11. Ortega, Man and People, p. 264.

12. Ortega, The Origins of Philosophy, p. 15.

4.3 Rational Explanation in History

1. Cf. Paul Langham, "Rational Explanation and Covering Laws," Southern Journal of Philosophy, 10 (1972), p. 472.

2. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 213.

3. loc cit.

4. Dilthey, Meaning in History, p. 66.

5. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 214.

6. ibid., p. 215.

7. loc. cit.

8. Dilthey, Meaning in History, p. 138.

9. William H. Dray. Laws and Explanation in History (Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 123.

10. William H. Dray, "The Historical Explanation of History", p. 108.

11. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 218.

12. ibid., p. 309.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness, trans., F. Williams & R. Kirkpatrick (New York: Noonday Press, 1957), p. 31.

14. Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (London: Hutchinson, 1947), p. 155.

15. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 218.

16. ibid., p. 215.

17. ibid., p. 290.

18. J. W. N. Watkins, "On Explaining Disaster," The Listener, January, 10, 1963, p. 69.

19. A. J. P. Taylor, Beaverbrook (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 426.

20. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 284.

21. ibid., p. 242.

22. Collingwood, "Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History", p. 55; "The Philosophy of History", p. 138.

23. Popper, Open Society, II, 267.

24. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 245.

25. Cf. G. A. Lundberg, Foundations of Sociology (New York: McKay, 1964), p. 58. This attitude is commonly accepted. See also Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History", p. 240; Alan Donagan, "Are the Social Sciences Really Historical?" Baumrin, ed., The Philosophy of Science, pp. 279-80; Theodore Abel, "The Operation Called Verstehen," Feigl and Brodbeck, eds., Readings in the Philosophy of

Science, p. 685.

26. Dilthey, Meaning in History, pp. 125 ff.

27. ibid., p. 148.

28. Dilthey, The Essence of Philosophy, trans., S. A. & W. T. Emery (University of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 2-3.

29. Dilthey, Gesammlte Schriften, V, 277.

30. Collingwood, "The Limits of Historical Knowledge", p. 99.

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